



C. Cuyler.



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WOODLAND COTTAGE.

A
NOVEL.

As the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and, in shadieft covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note.

MILTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HOOKHAM AND CARPENTER,
OLD BOND STREET.

1796.

WOODLAND COLLEGE

NOVEL

As the original
illustrations and in English country
Tues. for receiving in 18.



VOL. II

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HODGKIN AND COMPANY
OLD BOND STREET

WOODLAND COTTAGE.

ALTHOUGH Edmund used the utmost expedition in the journey, he arrived too late to give his mother the consolation of seeing him, her Ladyship having expired a few hours before he reached Beaufort Park.

He found Sir Thomas in his study, in extreme agitation.

“My father!” cried he, throwing himself into his arms.

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B

“Oh!

“ Oh ! Edmund !” replied Sir Thomas, folding him to his heart ; “ thou child of my love ! thou excellent young man !—how—how, can I ever part with thee ? Why, Oh ! why, (clasping his hands in agony) did I not remain in ignorance of the fatal truth ? Cruel Lady Beaufort ; after having so successfully carried on your deceit, why undeceive me now, to murder my happiness for ever ?”

“ For Heaven’s sake, Sir,” said Edmund (exceedingly alarmed, fearing his father’s brain was affected) compose yourself ; your spirits have been hurt by the melancholy scene you have witnessed, and—”

“ Yes, Edmund,” interrupted Sir Thomas, “ I have indeed been deeply hurt ; pierced to the soul : but oh ! how shall I tell you the dreadful secret, which Lady Beaufort, in her dying hour, revealed to me ; and yet, believe me, it cannot give you more poignant affliction than I feel.”

“ Tell

“Tell me,” cried Edmund, throwing himself on his knees before him; “tell me all, that by sharing your sorrows, I may lessen them, and prove the affectionate duty and love I bear to the best of fathers.”

“Call me not by that tender name,” exclaimed he, with extreme emotion; “I have no right to it. That unhappy woman, in her last moments, solemnly declared you were not my son!”

This terrible information shocked excessively the amiable Edmund. When he recovered from his first astonishment, he entreated his father to continue, and that he would endeavour to hear, with becoming fortitude, the particulars he had yet to be informed of. “You have told me I am not your son; the ties of parental regard are broken; what worse can I learn, than that he to whom I have ever looked up with the utmost filial affection, must henceforth consider me as an impostor, and

B. 2

hate

hate me as the usurper of a name I had no title to."

"Say not so, my Edmund," replied Sir Thomas; "Heaven is my witness, that your virtues have so endeared you to my heart, that 'tis for the unfortunate knowledge of the truth, and not for having been deceived, that I grieve. You are the son of my affections, and whoever was your father, I cannot love you less than I have always done."

At this moment, the nurse who had attended Lady Beaufort in her illness, brought a sealed packet to Sir Thomas, that had been found under her pillow, and to which the woman now recollected, she had often pointed, when she could no longer articulate.

It was directed to be read by Sir Thomas and Edmund, after Lady Beaufort's death.

"This,"

"This," cried he "will undoubtedly explain the mystery of your birth, my dear boy; but e'er I open it, let me declare to you, in the most sacred manner, that nothing it contains can alter the sentiments of affection I bear you; and that in me you shall find the truest friend. As long as by your conduct you continue to merit my esteem, no outward circumstance shall ever rob you of a particle of my regard."

Edmund kissed the hand held out to him, and bathed it with his tears. He could not speak.

Sir Thomas endeavoured to conceal his own emotions; and after a silence of some minutes, with trembling hands and palpitating heart, he broke the seal of the packet.

It began abruptly, and seemed to have been written at different times, and with

much agitation. Sir Thomas, in a faltering voice, began to read.

“ My illness is in my mind ; it is that which preys on my health, undermines my constitution, and will hurry me to my grave.

“ My senses are still perfect ; and my memory, but too faithful at this period of approaching death, shews me the wicked folly of my life. The torment of an accusing conscience has rendered me the most wretched of human beings, amidst the success of all my schemes. Warned by my fate, let no one quit the path of rectitude. I was hurried on by the violence of ungoverned passions, and false shame prevented my return ; instead of acknowledging my first falsehoods, I plunged deeper in guilt to conceal them.

“ But oh ! my offended God ! spare me,
I beseech thee, till, by this full confession,
I have

I have made all the atonement in my power for the crimes I have been guilty of, and shewn that my repentance is sincere.

“ I was the only child of my parents, and bred up with unlimited indulgence; my passions, by nature violent, from never being controuled, attained a strength of fury, my reason combated in vain. I was the heiress of my father's fortune; but he intended that his name and estate should be joined, by my marriage with his nephew, Mr. Denham, whom he had brought up from a child, and loved as his own son.

“ My cousin's attention to me proceeding from the goodness of his disposition, led me into the belief that he loved me; and although the most extravagant passion for him agitated my bosom, I treated him with insolence and disdain, to prove the power I fancied I had over him. Alas! I

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possessed

possessed none. My behaviour, the result of caprice, he imagined, proceeded from aversion. My father one day informed him of his intentions, that he should be his heir by marrying me; and added, that if I refused, he would otherwise provide for him. He thought himself so secure of that refusal, that he did not hesitate to comply with my father's request.

“ But how greatly was Mr. Denham surprised when I accepted his offered hand. Vexation and disappointment kept him for some time silent; at length, kneeling at my feet, he confessed that his heart was devoted to another: misery, he said, must be his lot, if he deserted the woman he loved, and ruin to all his future fortunes, if he refused me: that thus situated he threw himself upon my generosity, to take upon myself the blame of breaking off a marriage, which, from all my conduct towards him, he had every reason to believe I had agreed to, only to oblige

oblige my father; and he begged that I would shelter him from the anger of his uncle, which would be attended with the most fatal effects to him.

“Mortification and rage for some moments choaked my voice; unused to contradiction, and taught to consider the whole world at my command, this behaviour of my cousin’s roused every resentful feeling of my soul. I however commanded myself sufficiently to tell him, with assumed calmness, that as he had once consented to my father’s proposal, I had too great an opinion of him, to suppose he would break his word; and that, as he threw himself on my *generosity*, I should shew it, by accepting the creature of my father’s bounty, and although he had so barbarously told me his heart was another’s, I should hope at least for his gratitude, in return for my condescension.

“ So saying, I left him the statue of despair ; resentment had wholly taken place of my love for him ; and to be revenged for his flighting me, and avowing his partiality for another, I could at that moment have sacrificed myself and all the world. So truly does the poet say,

“ There is no hate like love to hatred turn’d ;

“ Hell has no fury, like a woman scorn’d.”

“ I determined not to marry him, though I had threatened I should ; but I was resolved on his ruin ; and to exasperate my father against him, on whom I knew his sole dependence was.

“ Whilst I deliberated how to bring this about, he furnished me with the means, by suddenly quitting our house, leaving a letter for my father, to explain his conduct, to avow his engagements with Miss Mansel, and to request his permission to marry her.

“ My

“ My father loved his nephew too well to be long angry at him ; and after regretting a short time the disappointment of his schemes in our union, he determined to agree to my cousin’s pleasing himself, and to divide his ample estate equally between us.

“ These kind intentions he communicated to me, and I pretended to approve, as the surest way of being able to counteract every step he took in young Denham’s favour. With this view I intercepted the kind letter he had written, and substituted one in its place, which, from my cousin’s temper and disposition I knew would enrage him too much to give me any apprehensions of a reconciliation.

“ It had the effect I wished ; for being provoked at the cruel, unrelenting manner in which this letter was written, and despairing of his uncle’s forgiveness, for what he had already done, he married Miss Mansel, and accepting the offer of a distant re-

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lation

lation who had an estate in Jamaica, and who promised to provide for him there, he soon after left England for the West Indies.

“ Thus was my vengeance against my unfortunate cousin satisfied for the present, by having driven him from his country and his friends.

“ But I did not stop here. One step in guilt leads on to another; nor can the wretch who once deviates from truth, say, thus far will I go, and no farther.

“ In constant dread of the artifice I had made use of being detected, I was obliged to be continually on my guard to intercept the letters on either side, and to forge others more fitted to my purpose. By these means I irritated my father to a great degree against his nephew; but still at times his affection would recur to the only son of a beloved brother. And hearing
one

one day accidentally, in spite of all my precautions, that Mrs. Denham was dead, in giving birth to a son, he relented towards the innocent child, whom, he observed, had never offended him, and ought not to suffer for the faults of his father.

“ In a fatal moment he confessed to me his intention of making young Denham his heir, in the event of my having no children. My implacable resentment to the father extended to his offspring, and I inwardly vowed that every art should be exerted to defeat this design.

“ Forgive me, Sir Thomas, and, if possible, detest not my memory ! Think that the writer of this is mouldering in the dust, e'er you read the confession of her crimes ! that her last hours were spent in deep repentance of the injuries she has been guilty of, and in the humble hope
that

that Heaven would accept her contrition.

“ If I am able, I mean to make a verbal confession to you, thou wor-thiest and best of men, and ask pardon from your lips ! I have often attempted it, but as often as I have, my faltering tongue refused its office. You must not, however, remain in ignorance of the cruel mystery I have to reveal ; I have therefore written this account at intervals, as my strength permitted.

“ And Oh ! Edmund ! thou amiable and excellent youth, forgive the wrong I must now do you ; think only of the fond affection I have ever treated you with, and drop a tear over the memory of the most wretched of women.

“ But let me finish my narrative.

“ When my father mentioned to me his intentions in favour of my cousin, I
had

had been married some years; and despairing of having any children of my own, I took the opportunity of my father and Sir Thomas going over to Ireland, to see an estate that was to be sold, to put in execution a scheme I had long meditated.

“ I declared myself with child, and I employed a faithful emiffary, on whom I could implicitly rely, to find an infant for the purpose.

“ A farmer’s wife in the neighbourhood had twins, about fix weeks old; but the boy being very delicate, appeared much younger.

“ Edmund is that boy.—For a sum of money his mother sold him to me, and I presented him to Sir Thomas and my father at their return, as the child I had been delivered of in their absence.

“ Great was the joy of both, but greater still was my anxiety about the child. His health

health was for some years very precarious, and my solicitude about the innocent instrument of my revenge, bore all the marks of the tenderest maternal love, whilst it proceeded, in fact, from the worst motive, implacable hate.

“ Soon after this, young Denham came to England for his education; my father was very partial to him, but he turned out dissipated and extravagant. At length he ran away with an actress, and what became of him afterwards we could never learn.

“ Had he remained with my father, my enmity might have sought his ruin, but the wildness of his disposition saved me from that addition to my crimes.

“ ’Twas then my father made a will, by which he bequeathed all his possessions to me, and to descend to my eldest son, and his posterity. The estate of Woodland

land he was to be put in possession of at five and twenty, even if I were at that time living. Failing me and my sons, the whole estate was to devolve to Mr. Denham. This made my anxiety so extreme for my son's marrying; but fate decreed it otherwise, and has made him the means of that disappointment I meant for others, falling on my own head.

“ The death of my cousin a few months ago, has awakened me to full conviction of the heinousness of the crimes I have been guilty of. My hatred seems buried in his grave, and my heart is torn with the most agonizing remorse, for having so violently indulged my resentment.

“ The united estates of Denham and Woodland, failing his heirs and mine, by my father's will devolves to Mr. Carlton, son of that relation with whom Mr. Denham went to the West Indies.

“ To

“ To him Edmund must now resign them.

“ I had hoped once more to have seen that dear boy, whom I loved with the utmost fondness, and to have asked his forgiveness. — But fate forbids; I feel the hand of death upon me; I shall never live till the arrival of Edmund! His parents were honest and virtuous, unsullied with the crimes that disgraced his supposed mother.

“ His father is dead; his mother and sister keep a small stationer's shop in Piccadilly. Their name is Groves.

“ I have now unburthened my mind of the heavy load which has for years oppressed me.

“ Farewell, Sir Thomas! farewell, Edmund! may your virtues meet the reward

ward they merit, in this world, as well as in a better."

Here Sir Thomas ceased, and Edmund, who had listened with mournful attention, still sat in melancholy silence, with folded arms and a dejected countenance. Deeply was his heart wounded with the conduct of her he had ever looked upon as his mother; she had been ever kind and affectionate to him, and though he could no longer esteem a woman of such a character, he yet gratefully recollected the obligations he owed her, and his tears flowed plentifully for the unhappy victim of unrestrained passion, whilst he mourned her errors, and lamented the share he had innocently had in her crimes.

He also grieved for the disappointment of the worthy Sir Thomas Beaufort, who at the moment of his joy and satisfaction at beholding the son he had so long and fondly cherished, on the point of coming
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of age, and in possession of a noble estate, sees himself at once childless, and all his fond hopes and expectations dashed to the ground.

The loss of parents, name, and fortune, was an unlooked-for blow on Edmund; but the still more dreaded fate, which hung threatening over him, the loss of his Matilda, and with her every hope of future happiness on earth, was an accumulation of misfortune, the fortitude of his mind could hardly support the idea of.

“My dear boy,” said Sir Thomas, “let not this unforeseen calamity overcome your spirits; consider you have to console me for the most cruel loss and mortification I ever could have experienced.

“You, my Edmund, must be my friend and comforter; though the ties of relationship are broke, those of friendship remain. Rouse yourself from this dejection,

tion, for your Matilda's sake, if not for mine."

This loved name acted as a charm on the unfortunate Edmund; he started from the state of melancholy silence into which his grief had plunged him. "Ah, Sir!" cried he, "you are all goodness, and I am fortunate in still possessing your affection; could I but hope my adverse fate would make no difference in her sentiments, I should yet look forward to days of tranquillity and joy."

"And why should you think this discovery will make a change in her?" replied Sir Thomas; "no outward circumstance can alter the sentiments of the woman who is worthy of my Edmund, as long as his virtues remain the same; and those will appear brighter in this adversity, than they did in their former prosperity. But, my Edmund, for still I must call you mine, let

Let us consult what are the proper steps to be taken on this extraordinary occasion. Whilst we act with integrity, no event can sully our honour, or take from us that inward peace of mind which results from a self-approving conscience.

Thus did the good man conceal the poignant affliction of his own heart, to soothe the sorrows of his excellent young friend.

But he was obliged to communicate a circumstance, which gave him a great deal of uneasiness. A few years ago, a lead mine had been discovered on the Woodland estate, which surveyors had reported, promised, if wrought, to become extremely productive. Sir Thomas Beaufort had not scrupled to expend a large sum upon this speculation, having no doubts that the estate would descend to Edmund; and, in order to raise money for this undertaking,
he

he had even granted large mortgages upon his own estate. But as Woodland, together with the mine, now belonged to Mr. Carlton, Sir Thomas said, that he must be extremely embarrassed, unless Mr. Carlton should, from a sense of justice, pay the money which the opening the mine had cost, as he was to reap the entire benefit of it.

Edmund was much distressed at this intelligence, and returned to Woodland, to inform Mr. Leeson and Matilda of the cruel reverse of fortune, which had blasted all his hopes of happiness.

The dejection which appeared in the countenance of Edmund when he arrived at the cottage, sufficiently announced him the bearer of melancholy tidings; and they immediately concluded that Lady Beaufort was dead: but it was some time before he could summon sufficient resolution to relate the extraordinary confession she had
I made;

made; and the dark cloud that hung over all his future prospects in consequence of it.

He however at length related the whole; then, pressing Matilda's hand to his beating heart, he said, "When I first avowed my ardent love for you, I was possessed of family and fortune; now, destitute of all; how can I presume to think of calling you mine? how, can I bear to involve you in that poverty and distress which is likely to be my portion? Could I endure to see my Matilda in a situation unworthy of her? madness is in the thought; never will I be the wretch to plunge such exalted goodness in difficulty and distress. No, my dear, my only love, you must forget me! my cruel destiny forbids every hope of happiness, and we must part for ever!"

But Matilda in a moment justified the good opinion Sir Thomas had formed of her,

her, by soothing the depressed spirits of her lover with the kindest sympathy; tenderly assuring him no alteration in his situation could ever decrease her affection, or shake her constancy.

“ Let us not, my dearest friend,” said she, “ entertain so dreadful a thought, as that of parting for ever; we will rather think of some means of alleviating these unlooked-for evils: be comforted, my Edmund, and let not your spirits sink in despondency—we will consult with my father what is the most eligible plan to pursue, and whatever he and you approve, your Matilda will most gladly agree to.”

These sentiments and assurances calmed the agitated mind of Edmund, and in some measure restored his composure.

“ Come,” said Matilda, endeavouring at cheerfulness, “ we will think no more on this disagreeable subject to-night; to-

morrow we shall be better able to decide what is best to be done. If you love me, Edmund."——“ *If I love you !*” cried he, with energy ; “ Heaven is my witness, I would sacrifice my life for your sake.”

“ I had rather,” interrupted she, smiling, “ you would preserve it ; and for this end I would have you, for my sake, banish from your mind all unpleasant reflections : resume your native cheerfulness, and trust in a kind Providence : all these black clouds will yet disperse.”

So saying, she took her harp, and striking its plaintive strings to his favourite air, she had the delight of seeing sorrow banished from his mind, and his countenance brighten with joy, whilst he hung over her enraptured and enamoured.

Next morning, whilst Mr. and Miss Leeson, and Edmund, were at breakfast, Mr. Nugent was announced.

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The concern painted in the honest man's countenance, declared him no stranger to the events that had taken place in the Beaufort family.

“ Oh ! Sir,” said he, taking Edmund respectfully by the hand, “ how have I been shocked to hear of the discovery that has been made ; I cannot tell the grief I have felt at the conduct of the daughter of my good old master, nor the sorrow it gives me to hear, that you, the heir of his virtues, are in fact, not heir to his riches.— Would I had never seen this day,” cried the old man, wiping his eyes. “ Then, Sir, there are all your honour's tenants, and all the poor people you and Miss Matilda were so kind to ; they are all breaking their hearts for your loss ; and wishing the fatal secret had gone to the grave with her Ladyship.”

“ My good friend,” said Edmund, “ your kind concern distresses me exceedingly

ingly—I have long innocently usurped the rights of another, and I must now restore them. Had I possessed this estate, it would have been my wish to have made my tenants and servants happy; and my successor, I hope, will equally endeavour so to do. But I meant to have been the first to have informed you of this event, and intended paying you a visit at Heath Castle this morning for that purpose. I cannot imagine how you come to be before-hand with me in the news.”

“An express, Sir, from your successor (who I fear is not such a man as you) disturbed my family by day-light this morning. Truly, when I read the letters (God forgive me) but I wished the writers, and the bearer too, had broken their necks. I have brought Mister Carleton’s letter with me,” continued he, “and shall keep it as a curiosity; for I have been on this estate, man and boy, these fifty years, next Lammas day, and never did I receive such a letter

letter before. But Mister Carleton was used to Negers in the Indies, and so, I suppose, he thinks we are all the same here."

The old man now took the epistle from his pocket-book, and, putting on his spectacles, began:—

"*Nugent*—I must observe," said he, interrupting himself, "that your good grandfather, or that ought to have been your grandfather; and worthy Sir Thomas too, used to begin, Sir; and, God bless them, sometimes *dear Sir*; but never less than Mister Nugent."

His audience could not forbear smiling at the good man's wounded dignity. They were however silent, and he proceeded.

"*Nugent*; for that I understand is the name of you, that are overseer of my estate, that I had almost been wrongfully de-

frauded of. I think it proper to inform you, I intend to be at Heath Castle this day week, and shall bring my attorney with me, to settle your accounts: so, I expect you will have them all ready.

“ I am told my farms are all lett much under value, by the advice of the impostor,” (I beg your pardon, my honoured Sir, for repeating the expression) “ by the impostor, who would have choused me out of every thing, if my cousin had not luckily told the truth before she died. I shall see into all these matters when I come. The snuggest house on the estate, Woodland Cottage by name, is lett, I am informed, to a bankrupt, for an old song; my mother is to live there, so turn him out. No more at present from

“ Your master,

“ ANTHONY CARLETON.”

“ There, gentlemen,” cried Mr. Nugent, folding up the letter, and replacing it

it in his pocket-book ; “ there is what my master, as he calls himself, is pleased to say. I think, however, he is not likely to be my master long—I shall deliver up my accounts, and resign my office, whenever the Neger-driver and his attorney arrive. I had a letter from him too, with the whole particulars of Lady Beaufort’s confession, or I should hardly have understood what the ’squire meant.

“ But you, my good Sir,” addressing Mr. Leeson, “ must not delay looking out for another habitation. I would not, for an hundred pounds, you should be here, when this insolent young man arrives ; for I know it would be very unpleasant to you and my dear young lady.”

“ Certainly,” replied Mr. Leeson, our stay here is impossible, and we must think of an immediate removal.”

“ Well, God blefs you all, wherever you go ; good morning to you ; I muft go and prepare for next week : but if I can be of any fervice to any of you, you know you may command me.”

So faying, Mr. Nugent left them, and mounting his horfe, returned in no very pleafant humour to Heath Caftle.

“ This is a fudden warning, my dear,” faid Mr. Leefon ; “ what fhall we do ?”

Matilda, with the foftest fenfibility, poffeffed much firmnefs and compofure of mind. She endeavoured to affuage the diftrefs of her lover, and relieve her father from the uneafinefs thefe unlooked-for events occafioned him. She had forefeen their immediate removal from Woodland would be the probable confequence of its not defcending to Edmund ; and already fhe had fettled in her mind the fcheme fhe now propofed, which was to go Newton Lodge,

Lodge, where she knew they would be welcome guests; and they would also have the advantage of Mrs. Mansel's judgment to assist them in their future plans.

Her advice was too judicious, not to be approved of by her father and Edmund; the latter lamented he could not accompany them there, for he had promised to meet Sir Thomas Beaufort in London as soon as possible.

"Besides," said he, in a faltering voice "I must not forget I have a mother, who may, perhaps, stand in need of the little assistance in my power to give. Poor woman! sure she must have been in sad necessity e'er she could have been prevailed upon to sell her child!"

"I think," said Matilda, "my father and I are likely after all to return once more to London; and if we should (she hesitated) you must introduce me to Mrs.

Groves; the mother of my Edmund shall be mine—your sister too!”

“ Best and most noble of women,” interrupted the charmed Edmund, “ how I adore your goodness, and how my heart exults in this proof of your affection ! But every hour brings to my view new excellencies in my Matilda, and heightens my admiration and my love. Whilst this sweet angel condescends to pity her unfortunate Edmund, and to cheer him with her favouring smiles, he will submit with resignation to his adverse fate ; and endeavour, by every laudable exertion, to compensate for the meanness of his birth, with the enlivening hope of being one day enabled to claim her dear hand, when he has acquired a situation not unworthy of her.”

With tender sorrow, and every assurance of faithful and inviolable attachment, this amiable couple took their leave of each other.

Edmund

Edmund proceeded on his journey to London, and Matilda prepared for a removal from Woodland Cottage. She left it with great regret: the happiest hours of her life had been spent there, in the society of her beloved Edmund; and she could not but lament quitting scenes endeared to her by so many pleasing reflections.

The sensibility of her heart was also deeply affected by the distress of her poor pensioners, and the concern they, and all the tenants and neighbours, expressed at her departure; who bemoaned the unlooked-for circumstances that had for ever deprived them of the kind landlord, and benevolent master and friend they had looked forward to, in the virtuous and excellent Edmund.

Mrs. Mansel was infinitely surprised when she got Matilda's letter, announcing their intended visit, and the reason of their so suddenly quitting Woodland Cottage.

Though extremely sorry for the cause, she rejoiced to see them; gave them the most friendly reception, and omitted nothing likely to raise the depressed spirits of her guests.

Mr. Leeson had been greatly hurt by the disappointment of those hopes and expectations for his daughter's happiness, which he had so reasonably indulged in the near prospect of her being settled so much to his satisfaction.

The being banished from a place he had considered as his home, and which, but a few short weeks before, had been fixed should be his residence for life, was hardly attended to, whilst his mind was occupied with events so much more distressing.

This was, however, no time to give way to despondency; it was necessary to take some measures for their future mode of living;

living ; and Mr. Leeson determined to go immediately to London, and consult Sir Thomas, and some others of his friends, leaving Matilda at Newton Lodge till his plans were in some degree settled.

He accordingly set out next morning by the stage, promising to send his daughter an account of his proceedings as soon as possible.

Matilda in the mean time endeavoured to repay the kind attention of Mrs. Mansel, by assuming the appearance of a composure foreign to her heart ; and that friendly woman was pleased in observing how much her young friend exerted herself to overcome her affliction, and that there was every reason to hope her kind attention to soothe Matilda's sorrows would, in time, be attended with success.

The little Harriet contributed not a little to divert her thoughts from the melancholy

choly subjects which were apt too much to engross them. She was a very entertaining child, and amused Matilda with all the lively playfulness of childhood.

She had improved astonishingly under Mrs. Mansel's care, who assiduously cultivated her opening mind. Her beauty which, had first attracted Mrs. Mansel's notice, seemed every day to improve—fine dark eyes, a quantity of beautiful light hair, curling in natural ringlets; the bloom of health in her cheeks, and a countenance animated with good-humour, made her altogether appear very engaging to every beholder; and Mrs. Mansel's fondness for her was not less than if she had been her own child; whilst Harriet returned her affection in the most endearing manner, not only by every infantine expression of love, but by an attention to her wishes and commands, that shewed she was deserving of her partiality.

In

In the course of a few days Matilda received letters from her father, and from Edmund. The former said little more than he was arrived safe in London, and had met with an old friend, who had offered him an apartment in his house, till he could get an habitation to his mind.

The letter from Edmund contained the tenderest sentiments of love and esteem. He informed her he was with Sir Thomas, who was endeavouring to procure him, by the interest of some of his friends, a place in one of the public offices, or a commission in the army.

“I would not determine,” continued he, “till I had consulted my lovely friend, who must be the arbitress of my fate. But though I own I should prefer an employment at home, which would give me an opportunity of sometimes beholding my beloved Matilda, and having my exertions to procure a competence for her acceptance, stimu-

stimulated by her smiles, and rewarded by her approbation. The honour and glory which might await me in a distant land, in the military line, to cover my inglorious birth with laurels, and render me a less degrading choice for her I love, makes me almost prefer being a soldier."

He concluded with saying he was to see his mother and sister the next day, having taken the precaution of sending Mrs. Groves a note, that the young man brought up by the bounty of Sir Thomas Beaufort, was in town, and would call on her the following morning; being fearful, that without some preparation the sudden surprise of seeing him might afflict the poor woman's spirits.

Matilda communicated the contents of her letters to Mrs. Mansel, and retired to answer them.

She reminded her lover, how little the circumstances of his birth had affected her,
even

even the first moment she was informed of them. As his superior worth would do honour to the highest rank, so could it receive no diminution by his being found to spring from honest and industrious parents, tho' of the lowest order of society. It was for himself she loved him, and however low his family, it should be her pride and pleasure to consider his relations as her own.

“ My ancestors,” continued she, “ however respectable, were by no means great ; and though my father once had the ambition of being allied to nobility, he has long since relinquished all such ideas ; they vanished before the merit of my dear Edmund. And for my part, I was early taught to think, that the descendant of virtuous parents, with the manners and education of a gentleman, the highest offer I had any right to expect. Fortune, at least that degree of competence, which will render us so far easy in our circumstances, as to prevent any reflections on our having precipitated

pitated each other into the difficulties of a state of poverty, and entailed misery where we would, I think, mutually die to insure happiness, is absolutely necessary. But as we are both moderate in our wishes, and not extravagant in our dispositions, we may look forward to moderate affluence, as no improbable, or very distant attainment.

“ With this view I would give my vote for some place at home, however small, in preference to the army; where merit does not always meet its reward.”

She ended, with assurances of her firm reliance on his honour and integrity, and that she would cheerfully acquiesce in whatever measures he should determine on.

Having finished this letter, and another to her father, she returned to the drawing-room, with looks of tranquil composure, that gave great satisfaction to Mrs. Mansel. Some time was spent on the interesting

ing subject Matilda's pen had been employed in ; she received the approbation of her respected friend, for the propriety of her conduct, who admired the greatness of mind she had displayed in all the unpleasant events of her life. These praises coming from the heart of Mrs. Mansel, were most grateful to that of Matilda. For though from her conduct, being the natural result of the noble and disinterested sentiments she possessed, she was not conscious of meriting the encomiums Mrs. Mansel so liberally bestowed ; she was gratified that the friend she esteemed thought her worthy of them.

The conversation gradually changed to the occurrences of their last meeting, and their adventures at Heath Castle, in their return from Plymouth.

“Apropos of adventures,” said Mrs. Mansel, “I was looking over an old cabinet the other day, that belonged to Captain

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tain Manfel's mother, amongst many other curious papers, I found a history in manuscript, which I thought seemed entertaining, and I laid it aside till I should see you here. It may amuse us now," continued she, taking it out of her writing-box; "and you will, perhaps, have the goodness to read it to me."

"Most willingly," cried Matilda, and immediately began the following narrative:—

A MANUSCRIPT.

"NEAR a small village in Hampshire, was situated an excellent house, with a large garden, lawn, shrubbery, and beautiful environs: at the end of the grounds there was a wood, with winding walks, rural seats and buildings dispersed; and
an

an unbounded prospect of the sea appeared at a distance.

“ The romantic scenery of this captivating spot delighted the eye, and led the thoughts to the contemplation of a Supreme Being: it awakened and harmonised the finer feelings, and excited sentiments of gratitude and admiration; producing in the mind very different sensations from those which are ever felt in a noisy town, or crowded theatres.

“ Such feelings ought to convince us of the reality of an all-glorious, all-powerful Creator, whose bounty and goodness is the source of every blessing we enjoy; and who allows us that cheering hope, we shall one day behold him in all his glory.

“ Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer were the owners of this seat. They had a handsome, though not an immense fortune, and lived in a style of elegance, and with true ancient
hospi-

hospitality, making all the poor around them happy; promoting industry and agriculture; and giving rewards and prizes to encourage that emulation which is so laudable in all ranks of people.

“ Belvoir Lodge was the place where the poor peasant was sure of being fed and clothed: and where the widow’s heart was made glad, who prayed for and blessed their generous benefactors.

“ The happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer was so interwoven in the health, prosperity, and welfare of an only son, that they enjoyed no pleasure in his absence.

“ Their constant care had been from his infancy, to inculcate in his tender mind the seeds of honour and integrity, with every noble virtue. The beauty of his figure, and his attentive and insinuating behaviour, gave them every reason to flatter themselves, that the seeds so carefully sown would

would bring forth the finest fruit, and make their darling George every thing their most sanguine wishes could desire.

“ He was sent to Oxford to finish his studies. His heart was naturally good ; but he unluckily formed an intimacy with two wild dissipated young men, Lord Rantam and Mr. Winton. They laughed at his notions of duty and affection to his parents, and persuaded him to accompany them to London.

“ He at first thought of writing to acquaint his father of his intentions ; but, partly from fearing he might not approve of his going, and partly from these new friends ridiculing him, he gave it up ; and set out in a post-chaise with them the next day.

“ When they were arrived, they entered into every scene of riot and debauchery that could be thought of. Gaming, a vice
produc-

productive of many other, occupied the greatest part of the night—drinking, dissolute women, and public places, the remaining vacant hours.

“Mortimer at first felt pangs of remorse, as often as the recollection of his parents recurred to his mind. To banish this painful remembrance he drank deep, and soon became the worst of the set.

“In a short time he was reduced to absolute beggary, having lost all his money, his credit, and having involved himself deeply in debt.

“In this deplorable situation he resolved to return to the university; and knowing well the generosity of his father, he was convinced he would supply him as soon as he informed him he was in distress for cash.

“Accordingly, one night, he stole away upon the top of a mail coach; but, alas!

how changed were his sensations—when he went to the metropolis, he carried with him health, spirits, money, and peace of mind—he returned without any one of these enjoyments.

“ Whilst he was making melancholy reflections, and considering how to induce his dear parents to forgive those faults he could not in his conscience forgive himself, the coach was suddenly stopped by some highwaymen, and either by accident or design, a pistol went off, and Mortimer was shot in the shoulder. He fell, and dislocated his ankle. The loss of blood and pain were so great, that he fainted; upon which the robbers supposing him killed, made their escape as fast as possible.

“ A return post-chaise passing, the driver offered to convey him to some place for assistance, but the agony he suffered was so violent, that he could not support the motion; he therefore very thankfully ac-

cepted farmer Fairland's humane offer, of a bed at his house, which was near the place where the accident happened.

“ He was soon seized with a high fever and delirium. It was some distance to Doctor Goodall's, a physician of great fame and experience. The honest farmer went for him himself, and quickly returned with him, who was astonished, and extremely concerned to find that young Mortimer was the patient he was brought to, for he had a friendship for his parents, and knew how doatingly fond they were of their son ; he therefore determined not to leave him till he should be out of danger.

“ During all these interesting events, Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer enjoyed their usual tranquillity ; having no doubt but that their favourite was going on with his learning and studies at Oxford. This
dream

dream of happiness, however, was soon destroyed; for one morning a letter was received from Lord Rantham, demanding payment of a debt of honour of three thousand pounds, which his Lordship informed Mr. Mortimer was due to him from his son, who, he added, was absconded.

“This was a dreadful shock to this excellent father. Mrs. Mortimer endeavoured to console him; for this charming woman never lost her presence of mind and fortitude. Turning to her husband, she said, ‘it is too true, my dear; this is a most severe stroke, and requires the utmost efforts we are capable of, to support it as we ought; for, at this moment it appears to us, that our brightest prospects are clouded over; yet, I hope, not lost for ever.’

“We are mortals, consequently must not expect to be exempt from misfortunes and disappointments. It is our duty to
D 2 submit

submit to the decrees of that all-wise Creator, who knows better what is good for us, than we do.

“ We know the excellence of George’s heart ; it is composed of the milk of human nature : he has been decoyed from the paths of virtue. I am willing to hope, what appears at present such a misfortune, may prove salutary in the end. It will teach him to avoid and detest that horrid vice, gaming, which is so productive of many others. Let us cherish that hope.’

“ Mr. Mortimer, delighted with the goodness of his wife’s sentiments, and fully sensible of the value of the exertion she had made for his sake, took her hand and pressed it to his heart, blessing the day that had bestowed upon him a jewel of such inestimable worth.

‘ You are, indeed, my dear Caroline, a tender, gentle, affectionate friend ; every thing
a fond

a fond husband can wish. What is to be done? I will send the money immediately, and then I will go to Oxford, and visit George.'

"He was upon the point of setting out next day, when he received a letter from Dr. Goodall, informing him of his son's accident; upon which dreadful intelligence he hastened to the farm.

"His old friend, the physician, informed him the ball was extracted, and his ankle set. He told him all depended upon quiet; Mr. Mortimer therefore complied with Dr. Goodall's wish not to see his son that day, and the next he had the happiness to be told he was out of danger.

"Their meeting was both tender and affecting. Mr. Mortimer had too much delicacy to mention any thing that could remind George of the unfortunate cause which had produced his misfortune. He
D 3 felt

felt great pleasure in writing to his dear Caroline an account of their son being out of danger, and the care and attention that was paid him by the faculty, and the honest farmer and his family.

“ Finding it impossible to remove him for some time, he determined to leave him in those good people’s hands; and, after rewarding farmer Fairland very liberally for all the trouble he had taken, he took his leave, intreating a continuance of his care and kindness to his darling George.

“ At the instant when Mortimer awakened from his delirium to a state of recollection, he was astonished at the beauty of his nurse, Selina Fairland. Her rosy cheeks were bathed in tears; her beautiful white hands were clasped together; her large, fine, expressive blue eyes were lifted up to *that* heaven, from which by the mildness and purity of her appearance, she seemed to have dropt.

“ She

“ She was dressed in white dimity ; her hair, which was the brightest chesnut, hung in great profusion over her beautiful face and shoulders, in artless curls and ringlets, formed by nature’s cunning hand.

“ The elegance, beauty, and simplicity of this lovely girl, astonished and enchanted Mortimer ; and when he heard the sweetest voice praying for his recovery, he was captivated and filled with admiration and gratitude. She required no ornament to set off her charms ; for it might be truly said with the poet,

“ Fair was her form ; but who can hope to trace

“ The pensive softness of her angel face.”

“ Taken thus by surprise, the heart of Mortimer was irrecoverably lost ; he cried out in ecstacy, ‘ Divine creature ! how came you here ? speak to me, that I may be sure I am awake ; or do I only dream ?—tell me ; Oh ! speak to me !’

“Terrified by the impetuosity of his manner, she imagined he was going to relapse; this idea alarmed her, and she called her mother; and then replied, in the mildest tone of voice, ‘Sir, I am farmer Fairland’s daughter, whose house you was brought to after the accident; and my mother and myself have nursed you ever since.’

“Alas! alas! my beauteous girl; why did you restore to life and reason, a wretch unworthy of your care?

“He was so affected, he covered his face with his handkerchief, and remained silent.

“Mrs. Fairland and her daughter were alarmed and frightened by these melancholy lamentations, which they imagined proceeded from a return of his phrenzy. They both entreated he would compose himself, and endeavour to sleep. He very reluctantly

tantly complied ; but Selina's image was always in his dreams, and floating in his imagination. In short, when awake, he thought only of her, and when he slept, she was ever present to his mind.

“ Her thoughts were equally occupied about the handsome and interesting stranger.

“ But to return to Belvoir Lodge.

“ Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer flattered themselves their son, when he recovered, would look back with horror upon his past conduct, and be reclaimed. She begged that her husband would permit her to go for him, as soon as the physician thought it safe for him to travel. She hoped, by her gentle admonitions, to rekindle in his mind those seeds of principle and religion she had taken such pains to instil.

“ In the mean time young Mortimer was recovering very fast in health and strength ; he took every day little walks with his lovely Selina ; attended her to the milking of the cows, and drank a mug of milk, which she presented to him. When she worked, he often read to her improving books ; at other times he accompanied her voice, which was melodious, and warbled many wild notes that surprised and pleased. Mortimer forgot all his dissipated companions, and all his cares in her loved presence. And now, having no appearance of complaint, except that his arm was still in a sling, Dr. Goodall permitted his return to Belvoir Lodge.

“ When that was proposed, he felt himself miserable ; for the very idea of parting with his adorable Selina seemed almost equal to death.

“ She, though totally ignorant of the deep impression she had made on his heart,
yet

yet when the approaching separation was talked of, began to find a dejection and melancholy steal upon her.

“ One morning as she was sitting spinning in her favourite grotto, by the side of a beautiful stream, that run in a serpentine direction through part of her father's grounds, and, thinking of her dear Mortimer's departure, she burst into tears, and exclaimed she was the most miserable creature in the world.

“ He had followed her unperceived, and it was with rapture he heard this, and was in an instant at her feet. Notwithstanding all his good resolutions to keep his passion locked up in his own breast, he burst out in a declaration of the most ardent love; at the same time assuring her the happiness of his future life depended upon her permitting him to hope that he possessed her affections.

“ Her joy and surprise overcame her; she was unable to speak; her faltering tongue refused its office.

“ Mortimer, alarmed at her silence, cried out, ‘ Oh! my Selina! my angel! speak to me, and say you do not hate the man who adores you, and who has dared to tell you so.’

“ Hate you! good Heavens! I hate nobody; but why should you think so ill of me? I have been educated by the best of mothers, and the best of fathers, with tenderness; by them I have been taught humility and sincerity, and to love every body; and alas! alas! Sir, nothing I ever experienced before ever gave me half the pain I now feel at your leaving us so soon.’

“ Delighted with this acknowledgment, he seized her hand, and kissed it in an ecstasy.

“ At

“ At at that instant he heard her father coming, who desired he would go with him to see a fine new granary he was building.

“ Vexed and mortified at this unlucky interruption, just at the very moment he flattered himself he was going to obtain a confession from the lovely daughter, of her partiality for him, he obeyed, and proceeded, lost in thought, by Fairland's side, who kept talking all the way of the crops he expected, and how well his farm was going on, not having the least suspicion of an attachment between Mortimer and his daughter.

“ When they arrived at the granary, he turned round with a smile ; ‘ Well, young man, what do you say to it ? Is it not a capital performance ? it will, to be sure, cost a power of money, but then it will answer by preserving the grain.’

“ Mor-

“Mortimer, who had his whole heart and soul engrossed with thinking of the charms of one object, had not paid the least attention to a word the farmer had been saying; he was awakened from a profound reverie, by Fairland's clapping him upon the shoulder. ‘Why, man! what are you thinking about? you have not heard one word I've been saying.’

‘Yes, yes, I have,’ replied Mortimer; ‘she is indeed an angel, every thing that is charming.’

‘Hey! what she? why you are certainly crazy; I have never mentioned any woman; I was talking about my granary, which I brought you this long walk to see. I cannot help laughing neither; she, indeed; why bless me, what she can you be thinking of?’

“Mortimer, alarmed at the dreadful absence he had been guilty of, and fear-
ing

ing a discovery, began to excuse himself, by saying, he was weak, which sometimes made him wander; and, by commending the improvements, he glossed over his mistake sufficiently to impose upon the honest farmer.

“ They fauntered back to the house, their thoughts very differently occupied—the one delighted with the prospect of a luxurious harvest, and the other meditating schemes to obtain an opportunity of again speaking to Selina.

“ But soon did these hopes vanish, when he beheld his affectionate and beloved mother waiting to embrace and conduct him to Belvoir Lodge. He tenderly loved her, and therefore complied instantly in getting ready to attend her.

“ But when he went to his room, to pack up his trunk, he sunk into a chair almost lifeless, and then took the resolution
of

of writing a few lines, as he was convinced he had no chance of speaking to Selina.

“ This letter was very short, and only contained these words :

“ My dear Miss Fairland,

“ I am doomed to leave you ; my mother has taken the trouble to come herself for me ; I dare not refuse to go : though, believe me, when I assure you, I leave my heart in your possession ; blest should I be if I could hear that soft voice pronounce my forgiveness, for having had the temerity of telling you I loved you ; and cheer my drooping spirits by giving me a ray of hope.

“ Remember me, and be assured the first moment I can, I will fly to you, to prove how sincerely and devotedly I am

“ Your's,

“ GEORGE MORTIMER.”

“ This done, he sealed and directed it, and conveyed it to her room.

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“In the mean time, Mrs. Mortimer was feasting upon brown bread, and a bowl of fine cream, presented to her by the lovely Selina. The elegance of her form, her beauty, the natural grace of her manner and gentleness, dazzled and amazed Mrs. Mortimer.

“She involuntarily got up, to treat her with respect. Poor Selina, who was covered with blushes, and in a tremor at the idea of approaching the mother of her favourite, was quite confounded at this politeness, and with great eagerness and humility intreated her to be seated.

“Mrs. Mortimer, still more charmed by the sweetness of her voice, took her hand, and seated her by her.

“Pray, my pretty maid, tell me how you spend your time in this lonely farm house? and by what means you have attained a manner and appearance, that
might

might shame all our modern young ladies of fashion.

‘ Madam,’ replied the modest Selina, ‘ whatever advantages you seem to think I possess, are all owing to the best of mothers. She formed my mind; she directed me in the choice of the books I ought to read; taught me embroidery and all kinds of needle-work; and, finding I had a turn for drawing, she also instructed me how to copy nature and to take views: but the ornamental accomplishments I was only permitted, as a recreation, and as a reward for fulfilling the household duties as I ought. My father keeps one maid servant, and a girl to help, and one man servant. This is all our establishment, and I assist and overlook every thing.’

‘ My mother was a woman of good family, and had the best of education; but, falling in love with my father at a very early period of her life, she forsook friends, fortune,

fortune, and great prospects, to marry him. Her relations never would be reconciled, therefore she had nothing to do but to submit to her situation, and to act as she has done, with good sense, and in a manner suitable to that lot she had herself chosen. She is doatingly fond of my father and me, and she often says, she is sure, had she married with ambitious views, for rank and fortune, she never should have been so happy as she is now.

“ Mrs. Mortimer was charmed with this ingenuous account, and smiling, said, ‘ pray Selina (for that I think is your name) have you helped to nurse my son ?’

“ This question brought up all the vermillion in her cheeks, and caused a fluttering agitation; she, with difficulty, could stammer out, ‘ My mother and I, Madam, nursed Mr. Mortimer; and, thank God, successfully, as he is recovered.’

“ Mrs

“ Mrs. Mortimer perceived with concern, the confusion of this charming girl, and thought it but too probable that their hearts might be mutually engaged, which must make them both unhappy all their future days. She could hardly help wishing this wonderful girl had been of equal birth and fortune with her son, as she thought it probable, that her mind, manners, and person would secure happiness to any man who should make her his wife.

“ Mr. Mortimer came to tell his mother he was ready to attend her. A deadly pale overspread Selina’s rosy countenance; she was seized with so great a trembling in her knees that she could scarcely support herself.

“ Mortimer durst not trust his eyes to look at her. When his mother had expressed her gratitude to all the Fairlands, for their kindness and care of her darling son, she presented Selina with a handsome pocket

pocket-book, to keep for her sake. She then gave her hand to her son, to conduct her to the chaise. He just stole a tender look at the lovely Selina, and got into the carriage, which was out of sight in a few minutes.

“When poor Selina lost sight of the chaise, she flew to her room to give vent to her sorrow: but how did her tender heart palpitate when she saw the letter before-mentioned upon her table. She took it up, and laid it down repeatedly; for though she longed to be acquainted with the contents, yet a timidity she felt alarmed her. At length she took courage, and when she read the reviving cordial, assuring her of his love and constancy, her joy was so great, she was almost reconciled to his departure.

“When her spirits were a little composed she went down to her mother, who began lamenting the loss of Mortimer, and extolling

tolling his mother and him. Selina very readily joined in these praises, and felt her cheeks glow with inward satisfaction.

“ Mrs. Mortimer and her son travelled on many miles before either spoke ; at last she began : ‘ My dear George, I have waited all this time expecting every moment you would speak ; but still finding you continue silent, I will relieve you. Convinced of the goodness of your heart, and the strength of your understanding, I have no doubt, with the keen sensibility and delicacy of sentiments I know you possess, you are at a loss how to begin a subject you know will give me pain.’ ”

“ He was going to speak, but she requested he would attend to her first, and then give his answer.

‘ I know,’ continued this excellent woman, ‘ how much your father and myself can rely upon your conduct, if not led away

away by dissipated companions, or bad example. Your virtues subject you to various temptations; the artful and wicked devise a thousand schemes to pull down superior merit to their own level. This, my dear son, your father and myself have lamented in your peculiar case; for had this not happened, I am sure you never would have given us the affliction of going with an abandoned set of young men to London, clandestinely, and losing your character and fortune at a gaming table, which occasioned that dreadful accident you have so miraculously recovered.'

"He was again going to speak, but she prevented him, tenderly taking his hand, 'I will not permit any apology; I know you, and I am convinced now I have pointed out the impropriety of your conduct, we never shall have cause to return to it a second time. Therefore, this is the first, and I have no doubt the last conversation we shall have upon such a disagreeable

able subject; and your father will receive you in such a manner that you will not find out he knows it.'

"Mortimer seized his charming mother's hand, kissed it with fervency, and his heart was too full to express by words half his gratitude.

"She wished much to be satisfied how far he was attached to Miss Fairland; but was convinced it was a subject which required the greatest delicacy; therefore judged it would be better to leave to chance the knowledge of a circumstance she was so solicitous about, than bring it abruptly upon the tapis.

"When they arrived at Belvoir Lodge, Mr. Mortimer received them at the door, with great joy and satisfaction.

"This cordial reception confirmed young Mortimer in his good resolutions,

not to act in a way ever to give pain to such dear and incomparable parents. He filled up all his leisure hours in improving his mind and acquiring accomplishments. But all his efforts could not drive Selina's lovely image from his thoughts; when he sketched a figure it was her's; when he composed poetry, she was the subject of his praise; and, in short, he nursed and cherished a passion that had taken deep root in his heart. Although he often sighed in private to visit his charmer, at the farm; yet, conscious that his parents would disapprove of this, he dared not attempt it.

“ Mrs. Mortimer, who loved her son too well not to watch him with a scrutinizing eye, and keen discernment, saw but too plainly, that the struggles he was making was undermining his constitution.

“ Alarmed for his health and peace of mind, she told her fears to her husband, and they agreed, that sending him a tour

was the most likely thing to divert his thoughts, and recover his health.

“ Accordingly they lost no time in proposing it to him. He very joyfully accepted the offer, and every thing was quickly arranged.

“ A heart of such sensibility as his, felt much at parting. He set out on horseback, attended by an old faithful servant, who lived in the family when he was born, and loved him as much as if he had been his own son. John was also a great favourite with his young master.

“ Mortimer determined in his mind not to leave England, without visiting his Selina; accordingly he stopped at a small inn on the road, a few miles from the farm, and ordered his servant to wait with his horses, and put up till he should return.

“ He

“ He knew a short path over the fields; he therefore jumped over a five-barred-gate, and flew towards the farm. Agitated and anxious, he reached the grotto at the end of the field; here he was charmed by the harmonious voice of his dear Selina, singing a plaintive song—the words expressing the loss of him she loved.

“ Delighted and rivetted to the spot, he stood and listened till she finished her lament; then he rushed forward, and in a rapture caught her in his eager arms, and poured forth all the tender sentiments he had so invariably felt for her.

“ She was so astonished, she doubted almost the reality; but the beautiful Selina having been worn out with hopes and fears for such a length of time, was reduced to be only the shadow of what he had left.

“ His joy was much abated at beholding her, as he dreaded, in a decline ; but she feeling herself secure of his affections, revived like a drooping lily when refreshed with a gentle shower.

“ He told her with fear and timidity, he was come to take his leave on account of being compelled to go abroad. She received this painful intelligence with unaffected grief, and he attempted to console her with assurances of unalterable fidelity. Their conversation was tender, and the hours passed on unheeded. At length Mrs. Fairland became very uneasy at the absence of her daughter, whose declining health and dejected looks had for some time been the source of great uneasiness to her. She at last resolved to go and look for her, and went to the grotto, knowing it to be her favourite place. To her astonishment she found her conversing with Mortimer ; she was both pleased and rejoiced to see him again, as she had taken
a great

a great affection for him ; she invited him to partake of their family dinner, and they all three proceeded to the house.

“ When her husband saw Mortimer return with them, he kindly took him by the hand, and told him he was heartily welcome to his old apartment, and the longer he staid, the more he would oblige him.

“ Mortimer was too happy to refuse such an invitation ; he readily accepted it, and remained a week, intoxicated with love, and rivetting those chains he could not break.

“ At length recollecting the necessity there was for him to proceed on his journey, he took the resolution of taking leave of the family of the Fairlands ; and the next morning he met Selina walking in the garden, he took her hand, looking fondly at her, and pressing it, said, ‘ Farewel,

my adorable girl, we must part; may you be happy!

‘ I have too high a sense of that honour I owe you, to extort any promise from you; all I shall say is, I never will give my hand to another; I shall return as I go—constant; and if I should have the misfortune to find you married, I must be miserable.’

“ He then hastily departed, without waiting for an answer.

“ He walked on to the inn, and when he retired to his room, all the interesting occurrences of the week crowded upon his imagination. One moment he repented he had not engaged Selina to promise to be his wife; another he applauded the generosity he had shewn, in leaving her free, and at liberty; and then he felt a recent pleasure in reflecting, if she did remain single, it was her own voluntary choice.

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And on mature deliberation upon the whole, he was pleased with his conduct; and he proceeded upon his travels in a state of mind to feel indifference and carelessness to every object but the favourite one that occupied his heart and soul.

“ When he arrived at Dover, and was going to embark, he felt sensations altogether new to him; he had parted from tender and affectionate parents he sincerely loved, and from one of the loveliest of her sex, and he was going to mix in a great world, totally unknown to him; different manners, customs, and languages.

“ After a very stormy passage he was landed safe at Calais, and proceeded to Paris. As he carried letters of introduction to the minister, and many people of high distinction, he met with a very flattering reception, and was invited to all the brilliant balls, assemblies, dinners, &c.

“ His figure handsome, his manner engaging, his temper sweet; how could he fail of being extremely *recherchée*, and making a most agreeable addition to all the gay parties?

“ Yet these alluring temptations never made him forget those dear ties he had formed in Hampshire; for though he was not so insipid as not to partake of, and enjoy in some degree the attentions and civilities he received, yet in the midst of them, his Selina, like his guardian angel, always kept her sway, and was ever present to his thoughts.

“ By these new scenes, his spirits gradually recovered, and the dejection that had spread over his countenance began to disappear.

“ He was very guarded about forming friendships, having suffered once so severely. But his reason and his inclination

tion united in the choice of one friend; it was Lord Henry Carnarvan, whose character was very different from Mortimer's; he was much livelier, and never yet felt a *penchant* for any particular woman; he laughed, sung, and danced, from morning till night. Yet with all this gaiety he had an exceeding good understanding, and fine talents and accomplishments, with candour and integrity.

“ These two young men liked each other's conversation and company so much, that they became inseparable. Lord Henry laughed at Mortimer's gravity, accusing him of cherishing some secret attachment, and his frequent fits of absence confirmed his suspicions.

“ The Duchess of D— was the reigning toast at Paris, and her assemblies were esteemed the most brilliant; all the *bon ton* frequented these fashionable parties.

“ These young men were talked of as the handsomest and most agreeable strangers at Paris, and the Duchefs was determined to have them in her train. She omitted no art to succeed ; she had beauty, wit, vivacity, flattery, all at her command ; and so successful were her endeavours, that Lord Henry was caught in her toils. He became desperately in love, and in a short time he was by her means plunged into gaming, dissipation, and every sort of extravagance ; and had accumulated such large debts, that he became seriously uneasy, being conscious that the Duke, his father, had made him such a noble allowance, it would be a shame to apply for more.

“ This was the first moment he ever had cause to be serious ; but though his reason made him sensible of his folly, yet he was so fascinated by that artful woman, that he had not the power to shake her off.

“ His friend Mortimer beheld with concern this infatuation, but forbore remonstrating, trusting to the goodness of his understanding, and the rectitude of his principles. He had, indeed, himself bought experience at a very early period of his life, but the prudence he had imbibed by his irregularities, had been productive of the best effects. He adored his father and mother, and he cherished a virtuous passion for an amiable object, which strengthened every propensity he felt towards acting right.

“ The Duchess of D— in vain essayed every art to bring him to her lure. He steadily persisted in his good resolutions; and though he mixed occasionally in her gay parties, yet he resisted every excess, and gaming in particular.

“ Lord Henry engaged deeper and deeper in dissipation and extravagance, and

from being the gayest creature living, he was now become the most melancholy.

“ His friend watched him with constant attention and anxiety, waiting for the proper moment to heal his mind, by friendly admonitions, and to encourage him to break off this connection, so destructive to his happiness.

“ One evening at the opera, in the opposite box to the Duchess of D—, there appeared a gentleman particularly captivating. His figure was elegant, his dress magnificent, and he possessed an ease in his manner, that seemed to shew he was a man of fashion.

“ His being quite new, made him remarked; but he seemed to have no eyes for any object but the beautiful Duchess.

“ Lord Henry, who sat always behind her, found she was so taken up with the stranger, that nothing he said was attended

to.

to. Whilst he was wondering at this sudden change in her behaviour, he was surprized at seeing the gentleman come into her lodge, and accost Mortimer with freedom, as an old acquaintance.

“ At first Mortimer did not recollect him; a difference of dress, and an improvement in looks, had so much altered the worthless Lord Rantham.

“ He returned his compliments with cold civility. This had no effect upon Lord Rantham; he laughed at him for his gravity, and begged he would introduce him to that angel in the box, and to Lord Henry, for he was but just arrived in Paris.

“ Mortimer, though reluctantly, could not avoid complying. Lord Henry saw visibly in his friend's countenance, that Lord Rantham was no favourite, and therefore did not feel disposed to encourage much intimacy.

intimacy. But as he had for some time been very tired of the whims and caprices of the Duchess, it was not with any concern that he perceived she had taken a sudden inclination for this stranger. She was a woman incapable of attachment; her vanity was insatiable, and novelty was her constant pursuit. In this instance both were gratified, and with rapture she received the fulsome compliments and adoration of a man, whose heart and disposition were exactly like her own.

“Mortimer, who truly and sincerely loved Lord Henry, was rejoiced to see things go on in so good a train to set him at liberty; and he had soon the comfort of seeing the friend of his bosom free'd from this embarrassment.

“It is time to make some inquiry after Selina. She was going on improving her mind, and praying for the health, constancy, and welfare of her Mortimer.

“One

“ One day, as she was sitting in her favourite grotto, diverting herself with her pencil, she recollected the pocket-book Mrs. Mortimer had given her ; which she had locked up with care, and never examined ; she hastened to fetch it. The outside was beautiful, and when she opened it, she found a miniature of young Mortimer, in an envelope, directed to his mother. She was at first delighted at this circumstance, but soon became convinced, that Mrs. Mortimer, by some mistake, had given her the wrong pocket-book.

“ Selina grieved to think what misery this loss must have occasioned to the best and fondest of mothers ; and she dreaded to reflect, how ill Mrs. Mortimer must have thought of her, for having kept it. Yet she sadly regretted the necessity of restoring it ; for the rectitude of her mind did not allow her for one minute to think of keeping it. She, however, thought there would be no harm in taking a copy
of

of it before she returned it, and immediately carried it to the grotto with transport, to take a sketch. As soon as she had finished the design, she sealed up the pocket book and its contents, and wrote a letter to Mrs. Mortimer, apologizing and explaining the reason she had not returned it before.

“ Mrs. Mortimer was charmed with her conduct, and returned her a kind and affectionate letter, with a present of a very elegant watch, and a miniature picture of herself. Thus was Selina rewarded for her candid behaviour.

“ Lord Henry Carnarvan about this time received letters from the Duke, his father, requiring him to return upon business, as soon as he could. It was about the time of the general election, and his Grace intended his son to be in Parliament. He went to his friend Mortimer, to persuade him to return with him ; but the time Mortimer’s
father

father intended he should continue his travels not being elapsed, he could not comply, though he wished it. He told him he would trouble him with a small packet to Miss Fairland, with letters to Belvoir Lodge. Next day Mortimer ordered a jeweller to set some of his hair in a locket, the shape of a heart. It was executed with great elegance; his cypher was in the center, and the motto, '*Je suis à vous,*' were written in brilliants around. This, together with a letter, assuring Selina of his love and fidelity, were entrusted to Lord Henry, to whom he gave an exact direction to the farm, and intreated he would deliver the parcel himself.

“ After Lord Henry had left Paris, Lord Rantham and his wild companions endeavoured to draw Mortimer into their society; but he was surfeited with their company, and determined to devote himself to study and improvement, while he waited anxiously for letters from England. At length

length the long wished-for account arrived, in which Lord Henry informed him he had faithfully executed his commission ; but he owned, that had it not been restrained by his friendship to him, his heart would have played truant, and left him, at the sight of the beautiful Miss Fairland. He added, that she trembled when she took the packet, and her lovely countenance expressed so clearly the delight of her feelings, that he almost envied the inanimate locket he knew it contained. He then assured him of the health of his family.

“ This letter, it may be supposed, gave infinite pleasure to Mortimer ; and it did not give too flattering a representation of Selina’s affection for him ; for as soon as Lord Henry finished his visit, she flew up to her room to open the packet. She was enchanted with the beautiful locket ; the motto revived in her mind the assurance he had given her at parting : she read the letter over and over, and the delicate and tender

der professions of love he made to her, rendered her exquisitely happy. She shed many tears of joy, and as soon as she could calm her agitation, she went and informed her mother of the whole. Mrs. Fairland adored her daughter, and was truly solicitous for her happiness: she never had inquired into the state of her heart, because she saw too plainly her fervent attachment; yet she knew her daughter was incapable of deviating from the path of honor; but upon this mark of ingenuous confidence Selina placed in her, she congratulated her upon the value of gaining such a heart as young Mortimer's; at the same time adding, she feared it was an alliance his parents would never agree to.

“ This had likewise been Selina's own sentiments; and, blushing, she begged her dear mother to advise her how to act. She replied, ‘ My dear child, the candour and sincerity of your own disposition requires no advice; act as your own sense and judgment

ment direct you in such a delicate situation.' This she was convinced was saying enough to such a noble mind as her's. Selina tied on the heart upon her white bosom, and retired to the grotto, to enjoy reading the letter, and to form a resolution.— She found her inclination very refractory to what she considered her duty. She was convinced, that she ought to sacrifice this new-acquired valuable acquisition, yet it seemed so cruel, she could not bring herself to do so. After a long conflict she resolved to render herself deserving the good opinion her mother had of her; but just at that moment, terrified by a pack of hounds in full cry, and a number of huntsmen, she darted out of the grotto, and fright giving speed to her flight, she was in her father's house in a few minutes, out of breath, and almost speechless.

“ The gentlemen who followed the hounds were amazed at the sight of so much beauty and elegance, and that she should
appa-

apparently belong to a farm house. Various were the conjectures they formed; but none could imagine she was farmer Fairland's daughter.

“ Mr. Winton, the friend of Lord Rantham, who made the third in the party to London with Mortimer, saw, admired, and determined, the first opportunity, to carry her off.

“ Selina, after she had got safe home, thought not again of the fright she had been in; her mind, always occupied with one beloved subject, returned to its natural bias. She was convinced of the propriety of not encouraging her dear Mortimer's suit, without the approbation of his parents; she was tortured with anxiety, and retired every day to her favourite grotto, to read over and bathe his letter with her tears. One day when she had brought her mind to write to his mother, acquainting her with all the particulars, she was seized by
two

two men in masques : her fright prevented her screaming ; they carried her over several fields, to a narrow lane, where there was a gentleman on horseback, with a pillion, upon which they placed her, and rode away, as fast as the horses could gallop.

“ She was in an agony of terror ; but expected, that they would at length get out of these bye paths ; and if, by any lucky chance they met passengers, she then determined to call for help.

“ After riding some hours, they arrived at a small house : they alighted, and, after offering her every kind of refreshment, which she obstinately refused to taste, they forced put her on a great coat and a large calash, to hide her beautiful face and hair, and hurried her into a post-chaise and four in waiting. The same gentleman she rode behind jumped in after her ; two servants
on

on horseback, with pistols, attended, and they travelled on with great expedition.

“ In a short time Mr. Winton (for it was he) took her hand, and began to apologize, saying, ‘ Loveliest of women, pardon the excess of my passion, that has hurried me on to commit such violence, as carrying you off from your friends.’

“ Thus run he on ; she pulled her hand away with indignation, and with so much dignity, that she awed this libertine. He was going to proceed, when she heard a carriage coming ; she begged leave to put down the blind for air, and took that opportunity of screaming out for help, before he could prevent her.

“ The carriage stopped, and a young man jumped out, and declared he would shoot the postillions if they offered to go on. They obeyed, notwithstanding all Mr. Winton’s threats and oaths. But how agreea-

agreeably was the terrified Selina surprized to find her champion was Lord Henry Carnarvan. Equal was his astonishment at seeing Miss Fairland. He rejoiced in this opportunity of serving the lovely girl his best friend's heart was devoted to.

“As soon as Winton found who the man was that had rescued Selina, he was convinced he had lost her; for though very partial to the ladies, he was not at all so to fighting for them; therefore, after a good deal of swearing, and a black eye gained in the fray, he resigned his prize.

“Lord Henry turned to our heroine, and asked if she would put herself under his protection, which she joyfully did; but finding it too late to return to the farm, he offered to take her to his father and mother. This being settled, they set out; but on the road to Belvidere Castle, the chaise broke down, and they were obliged to walk by moon-light. Lord Henry, in admiration

tion of his charming companion, found the greatest difficulty not to betray the tender feelings of his heart. She grew quite fatigued and exhausted, and he found it would be impossible for her to proceed. Being now very near Mr. Mortimer's, he determined to beg those hospitable people to admit them, which they did most willingly. But when Mrs. Mortimer saw Selina alone with Lord Henry at that late hour, she was astonished, and knew not what to think.

“ Selina was so much overcome with the fatigue she had undergone, and her mind was so much agitated with terror at the danger she had just escaped, and the emotion she felt at her deliverance was so great, that she fainted away upon entering the house.

“ The agony Henry expressed confirmed Mrs. Mortimer in her suspicions. However, she had her fair guest conveyed to bed; but in spite of all her care and attention,

tion, she grew delirious, and called every moment upon her parents, upon young Mortimer, and Lord Henry, to save her.

“ Mrs. Mortimer, shocked at the state this charming girl was in, though she feared it was owing to her impropriety of conduct, sent for Dr. Goodall, who exerted all his skill, and in a few days restored his beautiful patient to life and reason.

“ As soon as she was perfectly sensible, she requested to speak to Mrs. Mortimer alone ; when, with her usual candour and noble sincerity, she gave the whole account of her conduct, with every particular ; not omitting the letter, and the heart she had received. When she finished, she laid the letter and the locket in Mrs. Mortimer’s lap, and hid her blushing face in the bed clothes. Astonished at this disinterested conduct, Mrs. Mortimer felt admiration and love for this generous girl ; it brought to her recollection her behaviour

our about the pocket-book and miniature picture. Whilst her mind was taken up with these thoughts, poor Selina, ever diffident of herself, was suffering torture.

“ At last Mrs. Mortimer caught her in her arms, and told her the nobleness of her mind had won her affections; and she returned the letter and the locket, telling her, she begged she would answer the one, and wear the other, assuring her, she should no longer object to her son's choice, as she was convinced she was too amiable for any man to change, who had once been attached to her.

“ Selina wanted to leap out of bed, to fling herself at her benefactress's feet, who would not permit it, but desired that she would endeavour to compose herself, and try to sleep, as Mrs. Mortimer dreaded; in her weak state, the effect of so many contending passions, and such sudden and unexpected happiness.

“ Selina intreated Mrs. Mortimer to have the goodness to inform her parents of all the events that had happened, and her present happiness in being under her protection. She complied, adding, there was an apartment at their service, and a hearty welcome, if they would come and see their very amiable daughter.

“ She informed Mr. Mortimer of all these particulars, and he joined her in the opinion, that their son had made a most excellent choice.

“ Nothing could exceed the unhappiness of Fairland and his wife, when they missed their beloved Selina from the grotto; it is not possible to describe their distress. At last they saw a letter, which only contained these words:

“ Expect not to see the divine enchantress of this grotto; don't take the trouble
to

to try to find her, for long before you read this, she will be out of reach."

"This confirmed their despair; and till they were blessed with the news from Mrs. Mortimer, all their inquiries had been fruitless.

"They set out instantly, and when they arrived, they found their daughter walking, with the assistance of Mrs. Mortimer, in the beautiful wood near the house. Her mother flew and took her in her arms: neither could articulate for some minutes; at length they congratulated each other; and Selina said, 'How can I find words to express the obligations I owe this good, this generous Lady? Never, my dear mother, should I have had the happiness of seeing you again, had it not been for her. By this time Mrs. Mortimer saw that the warm transports of gratitude would overcome her lovely patient, as yet too weak for such exertions; and therefore tenderly

F 3

taking

taking her hand, led her to a thatched seat, which commanded a beautiful prospect. 'You must give your opinion of this, and some day before I part with you, you shall make a sketch of it: this is a favourite spot of your friend George's, and I do not doubt but we shall find your name carved upon the trees.'

"This speech brought blushes into her cheeks, resembling the new-blown rose. Her mother was so amazed at what she heard, she knew not what to say. Mrs. Mortimer turned to her with a smile; 'I have invited you, and Mr. Fairland, my dear Madam, to consult with you both in what manner we shall punish two very disobedient children, your Selina and our George; for they have dared to exchange hearts without our leave.'

"This agreeable manner of shewing her approbation, delighted Mrs. Fairland, and she was going to return her grateful thanks, when

when she was again prevented by Mrs. Mortimer, continuing, 'Your charming daughter has thought proper to place so much confidence in me, that she has told me all their secrets; and the only penalty I have enjoined is, to allow her to keep the heart her worth has so deservedly won; and Mr. Mortimer joins me in earnestly desiring to see them united.'

"This happy party talked on, till they were informed dinner was ready, when they returned to the house, and at their arrival found Lord Henry Carnarvan, who had rode over from his father's, to inquire after his fair charge. When he saw her, he felt emotions he could with difficulty conceal; but he never forgot his friend was devoted to her. He was surprised to see that she had recovered her health and beauty so much. She thanked him, with gratitude and sincerity, for all the anxiety he had expressed on her account, and she

F 4. inquired.

inquired if he knew what was become of Mr. Winton.

“He told her one of his servants had chastised him pretty severely, which he deserved; and he heard he was since gone abroad. He added, laughing, he believed he had little to fear from his resentment, as he fancied he was not a very valiant knight errant.

“This gave her great pleasure; for she had a dreadful apprehension of being the cause of a duel. Henry’s curiosity had been extremely excited by meeting our heroine in such an awkward situation, though he had too much delicacy to ask any questions. This was perceived by the good and discerning Mrs. Mortimer, who turned to Miss Fairland, and said, ‘My dear child; for so I hope soon to call you, I will spare you the pain of a disagreeable recital, that only serves to renew unpleasant recollections; though, thank Heaven, they have
termi-

terminated so happily. But it is proper Lord Henry, who interests himself so warmly in George's concerns, should be made acquainted with all the particulars of your romantic adventures; for no heroine of a novel can give a finer description of the enterprising lover, the plot, and the carrying off, than you can; and if a more valorous knight than the one of the hunting squadron had not providentially come to your aid, and taken from the monster his prey, we never might have been so happy as we now are in the possession of our dear Selina. She then gave the whole account.

“ Henry, with a deep sigh said, though he must ever detest Winton for the villainous manner he had taken to obtain such a blessing as Miss Fairland, yet he could not wonder at any man who knew her, wishing to make himself agreeable to her. He said this in so feeling a manner, that it confirmed Mrs. Mortimer in her opinion,

F 5

that

that he was deeply in love with her; and that was the reason she had taken such pains to inform him of the prior attachment between her and his friend.

He became pensive and absent: he ordered his horses soon after dinner was over, and returned to the castle. He went directly to his own apartment, out of spirits, but resolved to conquer a passion he saw was hopeless. In the midst of this struggle with himself, he heard a gentle tap at his room door; his sister appeared, and told him she had stole away from the drawing-room to tell him there was a delightful family come to spend a week at the castle; Governor and Mrs. Fitzallen; one son, a captain in the army; and one daughter, Miss Lucy. She is the loveliest creature, said the lively Lady Susan, I ever beheld: Henry, you will lose your heart. And pray, my pretty sister, what do you think of her brother? for I am much mistaken if, by that blush, you do not think him

him very charming too. Why, yes; no, yes, I rather think he is. Well make haste and dress yourself, and come down; for we are to make out a dance. This is our public day, and there are a great many people below.

“He obeyed her commands, and when he was introduced he really thought his sister had not done justice to the beauty of Miss Fitzallen; for except Selina, he never had beheld her equal.

“She was graceful, elegant; accomplished and, in short, the *toute ensemble* was very enchanting. After supper they sung catches; and when the one, ‘Come live with me, and be my love,’ was sung, they involuntarily looked at each other, and blushed. Captain Fitzallen was tall, had a fine manly expressive countenance, dark eyes, and white teeth: he was attentive, insinuating, agreeable, and accomplished. He was captivated at first sight with Lady

Susan, as she was with him ; consequently they mutually succeeded in pleasing each other.

“ She was little, but a pretty figure ; very lively, and her countenance was rather engaging, than regularly beautiful. She had fine dark eyes, a beautiful hand and arm ; and was, in all respects, extremely pleasing. The Duke and Duchess fondly loved her, and indulged her in every wish. She was their only daughter, and the Marquis of Worthing and Lord Henry their only sons. The former was abroad at Brussels, as our Ambassador. His brother had wished to be in the army, but as he was heir to a large fortune, the Duchess would not consent.

“ Governor Fitzallen was returned from his government of Pondicherry in the East Indies, with an immense fortune, honourably acquired. He had now returned to England to settle with his family, and his
desire

desire was, to purchase an estate in the neighbourhood of his old friend, the Duke of Luncarty. This was equally agreeable to every individual of each family.

“ The week was spent very agreeably, in riding, walking, water parties, concerts, balls, and every amusement that could be thought of.

“ One day they made a party to sail upon the sea, in a vessel Lord Henry had built for that purpose ; and they carried a cold dinner, and a band of music on board the *Phoenix*. The weather was fine, the sea calm, and every thing conspired to make the scene enchanting. The whole company were charmed, and felt, that this not only deserved the name, but was in reality a party of pleasure, of the most delightful kind. Lord Henry and the Captain, transported with the looks and conversation of their chosen favourites, seized this

this opportunity of offering them their hands and hearts.

“ These amiable girls, having no idea of coquetry, candidly acknowledged they were happy in the conquest they had made of two such valuable hearts.

“ The Duke and the Governor both saw and approved their children’s choice.

“ The party returned to Belvidere Castle in high spirits, and they determined to give a masqued ball. The cards were wrote, and sent all round the country. The young ladies took upon them to make, and direct all the decorations. The ball-room was twisted with myrtles, jessamine and wood-bines were intermixed with orange and lemon trees in full bloom. It was illuminated with lamps of various colours; tents were pitched in the park; French horns and clarinets were dispersed in many places. All the tenants’ daughters were dressed in a
kind

kind of uniform of white muslin, with green sashes; straw hats, with bands of flowers fresh gathered, diffusing their fragrance, and bouquets in their bosoms. The young men were in green, each leading his blooming lass in his hand.

“ There were harlequins, chimney-sweepers, fortune-tellers, gipseys, dancers, nabobs, friars, nuns, sultanas, &c. &c. Mrs. Mortimer, who thought this gay scene might amuse Selina, insisted upon her accepting the invitation; and they all went together, in the character of Derby and Joan, a Quaker and his wife, and a shepherdess. It was a delightful entertainment, and the dancing had begun, when a shepherd walked in, whose figure and address pleased every body. He wandered about, without attaching himself to any particular party, till he met with the charming shepherdess he was in search of.

“ She

“ She was sitting pensive in a beautiful alcove, admiring the dashing of the waves against the shore. He approached her, and pressed her to dance ; she refused, and after an interesting conversation, he could no longer resist discovering to her he was her dear and constant Mortimer. The happiness was complete when he discovered himself to his own and her parents. But they all agreed to keep the secret, which gave him an opportunity of teasing his friend, Lord Henry, and puzzling all the company.

“ He then informed his lovely Selina, he had received a kind letter from his father, permitting him to return, and approving his choice. He had travelled night and day ever since ; and when he arrived at the Lodge, he heard the whole party were gone to the masquerade at the Castle : he inquired her dress, and he determined to be in one to suit it ; and as soon as it could

could be got, he followed the much-loved party.

“ Next day he visited at the Castle in his own character, and explained all the confusion he had occasioned.

“ The time now soon arrived to join these hands in wedlock : it was settled, that the marriages should all take place in the Duke's chapel. The day was fixed, and three more beautiful brides, or three handsomer bridegrooms, could not be seen. The day passed off with joy and happiness to all parties.

“ The Duke made immense settlements upon Lord Henry. The Governor gave his daughter thirty thousand pounds : Mr. Mortimer gave his son and the charming Selina, two thousand pounds per annum. The Governor presented her with some very fine jewels. The Duke gave Lady Susan thirty thousand pounds, and their two rich fathers made this wedding day a jubilee ;
and

and to every tenant's daughter, who had accepted a lover, they gave fortunes suitable to their situations, and married them.

"Thus turned out the several adventures of these generous good people; which is one instance of many, shewing that good morals, good principles, candour, integrity, and steadiness, are the best foundation to build happiness upon, even in this life; and sooner or later will always be rewarded."

Whilst Mrs. Mansel and Matilda were thus beguiling time, and amusing themselves at Newton Lodge, Edmund fulfilled his intention of paying his duty to his mother.

With trembling limbs, and a beating heart, he entered her little shop in Piccadilly. A young woman stood behind the counter;

counter; who, on his inquiring for Mrs. Groves, went immediately to call her.

A very decent elderly woman appeared. Edmund attempted to speak, but was too much overcome with a variety of undescrivable emotions, to be able to articulate a word.

Mrs. Groves was a woman of great humanity, and though she knew not who the stranger was, he appeared ill, which was sufficient to interest her in his behalf. She begged he would walk into the parlour, while she bid her daughter bring the gentleman a glass of water.

He accepted her offer, and after a little while, his spirits growing more composed, he summoned resolution to explain the cause of his visit. 'I believe, Madam,' said he, 'you got a note yesterday to inform you I was to call here this morning.'

"Good

"Good God! Sir, are you Mr. Beaufort?"

"I am," he replied, "the person who has so long usurped that name; but the mystery is now explained. Lady Beaufort, on her death-bed declared the truth; and I now come to pay you the duty and affection of a son."

He dropped on his knees before her. The good woman folded her arms about him; "God Almighty bless you, Sir!" said she; "it is many years since I have seen you; for you was but a little boy when I left Yorkshire. But let me ask you one question; if you are indeed the person you tell me, you have on your right arm a scar;" "I have," said he stripping up his sleeve; "it is a mark I have always supposed I was born with, for I never remember how I came by it."

"No,

“ No, Sir,” replied Mrs. Groves, “ it was a hurt you received when you was an infant.”

“ Is that young woman I saw just now your daughter,” said Edmund ; I long to embrace my sister, and to shew to her and you, that I feel the affection of a son and brother. First, however, I would wish to know, how you came to part with me ? it must, surely, have been some extraordinary motive, that could induce you to sell your child.”

“ To sell my child !” interrupted Mrs. Groves ; “ God forbid I should ever think of such a thing !”

“ Did you not sell me to Lady Beaufort ?” exclaimed the astonished Edmund.

“ Yes,” replied she, “ I sold *you* to Lady Beaufort ; but *you* are not my child.”

“ Hea-

“Heavens! what do I hear? are you not my mother? who then is?”

“That I am not your mother,” answered Mrs. Groves, “I well know; but is, I cannot inform you. All I can tell you, you shall hear.”

Edmund threw himself into a chair, and in extreme perturbation prepared to hear Mrs. Groves’s account.

“It is now,” said she, “about five and twenty years since that young woman, the only child I ever had, was born. My husband was absent, having gone to take possession of a farm about fifty miles off; and I was to follow him, whenever I was able to travel. Sitting one evening alone in my cottage, my brother, John Brown, who was footman at that time in a gentleman’s family, came hastily in with a small basket in his hand, in which lay an infant boy fast asleep. ‘Ask no questions, my
sister,’

sister,' said he, 'I was bid to destroy this child, but I cannot; take him, and take this purse of gold, which was to have been the price of my crime: do what you will with it; the blood of the sweet innocent shall not lie at my door. Farewell, I must be gone.' He left me instantly, and I was in such amaze, I could scarce believe that what had passed was any thing but a dream. The purse of gold however was in my hand, and the crying of the child soon convinced me it was reality. I opened the basket, the infant continued screaming, and I fancied its cries proceeded from pain; on examination, I found my conjectures right; a large pin had been made use of, to fasten the mantle in which the infant was wrapped, and the point of it had sadly hurt your little arm. It bled very much, but I bound it up as well as I could; and putting you to my breast, you sucked very heartily, and then fell asleep. Upon looking at your clothes, I found them very fine; and the pin shone so bright, I fancied it must be diamonds.

I put

I put it carefully by, and fearing if my husband knew of the money, he would never rest till it was all spent, I determined to keep the whole a secret from him, and gave it out I had been brought to bed of twins. My story was believed, and when my girl was a month old, I set out to join my husband, whose new farm was on Sir Thomas Beaufort's estate.

“I had not been at home but a few days, when Lady Beaufort's housekeeper came to see me: she seemed vastly charmed with the children, particularly you; and one day, after talking a great deal upon the difficulty I might have in providing for twins, at length, making me take an oath of secrecy, she informed me of Lady Beaufort's wish to have a boy, and that she would give me a hundred guineas down for mine. I hesitated; but asked, if I might not consult my husband? this was agreed to, after he also had taken an oath of secrecy. He was pleased with the proposal,

posaf, which he thought would be the making of all the family; and I agreed to it the easier, as I thought it a good way of providing for you, without injuring my own child."

"What was the gentleman's name," said Edmund, "that your brother lived with at that time?"

"Indeed, Sir, I cannot recollect."

"Where is your brother?"

"Alas! Sir, I know not; he enlisted in a recruiting party that very night after he left me, and I have never heard any thing of him since."

Edmund sat for some time in a mournful silence, revolving in his mind the events he had just heard. At length he arose; and after assuring Mrs. Groves of the gratitude he felt to her brother and her, for

the preservation of his life, he intreated that she would endeavour to find out what was become of her brother, and recollect, if possible, with whom he had lived at the time she mentioned. He was then leaving the room, when she suddenly called him back, and said, that the money she had got with him should be returned, as soon as the profits of her little shop would permit ; and here, Sir, is the pin I mentioned (taking it from her housewife, where she said she had always kept it, and presented it to him. It was a very fine sapphire in shape of a heart, set round with brilliants.

“ This,” said he, “ I will take, it may be a means, perhaps, of one day discovering my birth, and restoring to my parents, if yet they live, their long-lost child. The money however is your own ; keep it as a reward for your humanity to an unfortunate infant, thrown upon the mercy of your brother. I trust I may one day have it in my power to add to the sum ; but never

ver will I diminish it. So saying, he hurried out of the shop, and returning to Sir Thomas Beaufort, related to that gentleman the extraordinary conversation he had had with Mrs. Groves.

Sir Thomas listened with attention; and examining the pin, observed, from its value, it must have belonged to some person of consequence, and was too remarkable not to be immediately recognised. I would have you wear it, who knows, but it may at some lucky moment, lead to the knowledge of your family, by attracting the eyes of the person who put it in your mantle.

“After five and twenty years,” said Edmund, as he placed it in the bosom of his shirt; “I fear it is extremely unlikely I should ever be so fortunate. Perhaps,” continued he, “my parents may not wish to acknowledge me—the offspring, probably, of illicit love, and in the

first moments of my existence, devoted to death."

"The Providence that has hitherto preserved you, my dear boy, that saved you from the cruel fate that awaited your earliest days, and placed you in a situation where you have received an education not unworthy an exalted birth, will, I firmly trust, still continue to watch over you. You have every reason, from the events of your past life, to trust in the care of Heaven."

Sir Thomas Beaufort then informed him that Mr. Carlton had positively refused to make any compensation for the expence he had been at in opening the lead-mine on the Woodland estate; but had insisted upon having the estate clear of all incumbrances, agreeable to the letter of the will. "This," said the worthy Baronet, "will come extremely heavy upon me, and I fear I shall be obliged to sell great part, if not

not the whole of my own estate, to pay off the mortgages.

“ For as I looked upon you as sole heir of my fortune, as well as of Lady Beaufort’s, I made no difficulty of burdening the Beaufort estate, to improve that of Woodland. This would have been extremely advantageous, had you really been my son, but as things have turned out, it is a most unfortunate affair.

“ What a confusion and distress has that poor woman caused, by giving way to her revenge for Mr. Denham’s refusal ! Her conduct, and the result of it, gives a strong proof of the necessity of regulating our passions, and confining them within the bounds of reason and moderation.”

Edmund finding that Sir Thomas Beaufort was upon the point of ruin in consequence of what he had done through affection to him; took, in despair, the resolution

resolution that he should no longer remain a burden upon that excellent man. He determined rather to abandon his country, and even to forsake his Matilda; and accordingly he wrote to her a letter, in which he deeply lamented his cruel fate, which had again clouded over his every hope of happiness. "Never," said he, "my beloved Matilda, will I impose upon the generosity of your nature, by soliciting a continuance of your regard, for so unfortunate a being as myself.

"Whilst I had a name, and could suppose myself the child of honest industry; when you nobly offered to share with me the small pittance my exertions might procure, I blessed you for your goodness, and still looked forward with hope to some future day when the acquisition of a competence might permit me to call you mine. But now every hope is vanished, and torture as it is to my heart to make the request, I must intreat you to forget me.—

Be

Be happy with some more fortunate man, who has a name to offer you, which you need not blush to accept; whilst I, in some far distant land, nourish my ill-fated passion for the loveliest of her sex, and weary Heaven with prayers for her happiness."

The resolution of Edmund was taken to join a detachment of recruits which were soon to sail for the East Indies; he would not, however, inform Sir Thomas of his intentions, as he well knew how many friendly arguments he would use to induce him to alter them. "I have unintentionally injured that good man," said he to himself, "but too much; I will no longer be a burden upon him; the unfortunate imposition which has been so long successfully practised, will, I fear, irreparably injure his fortune; he, I know, will anxiously wish to assist me, if I tell him of my plans; I will therefore depart in silence,

and no longer trespass on the bounty and liberality of the best of men."

He then wrote a letter to Sir Thomas, explaining the reasons of his abrupt departure, lamenting the sad necessity he felt himself under of quitting his friend and benefactor, and one whom he ever should regard with the love and affection of the most dutiful son to the best of fathers.

As the recruits were already at Plymouth, and waited only for a fair wind, Edmund had no time to lose. He set out from London that very day in the Exeter coach, as the speediest method of conveyance; but with all the expedition he could use, he arrived too late at Plymouth, the transports had all sailed the evening before, under convoy for the East Indies; and as the wind was easterly, it was thought by that time they were clear of the channel.

This

This was a severe disappointment to Edmund; he walked along the road leading from the town to the dock, in melancholy sadness, revolving in his mind the various events of his past life, and in doubtful suspense what plan to pursue for the future.

He was lost in thought, when a voice demanding charity assailed his ears. Always ready to relieve the distressed, he had put his hand into his pocket, before he recollected the very low state of his finances.

He looked up, and beheld an old soldier, whose weather-beaten face and wooden leg, pleaded his cause with Edmund more powerfully than his reiterated petition; he gave him a shilling, and received many blessings in return for his bounty. He had not proceeded far, when again the old soldier's voice attracted his attention; he turned round, and perceived
the

the poor man hobbling after him as well as he could, and calling him to stop. Edmund returned towards him; "Here is a pocket-book, Sir," said the old soldier, "which I believe you have dropt."

"No," said Edmund, taking it in his hand, "it is not mine, but probably the owner cannot be far off. Here friend," continued he, "is another shilling for your honesty, and if I discover the owner, and there is any reward for finding the pocket-book, you shall hear from me. Where shall I find you?"

"God bless your honour," said the poor man, "I am well known about this town by the name of Corporal Trim."

Edmund, once more left to himself, examined the pocket-book, for some clue to guide him in restoring it to its owner; the lock was very handsome, and of gold, with a cypher of L. C. and a coronet.

Satisfied

Satisfied that this outward mark was sufficient to enable him to find the person whose property it was, he put it in his pocket, and returned to the Fountain inn at Plymouth, determined to inquire for any recruiting party in the neighbourhood, and enlist in the first he met with.

He was going to make these inquiries of one of the waiters, when he saw a very handsome travelling coach in the inn yard, with the same cypher and coronet that was on the pocket-book. He immediately guessed they belonged to the same person; he asked whose equipage that was, and was informed the Marchioness of Clarville had arrived a few days before in a vessel from Lisbon, and was to pursue her journey to London, early next morning.

Edmund delivered the pocket-book to the waiter, and bid him tell the lady a poor man had found it upon the high road.

road about half a mile from town. The waiter returned in a few minutes, and told Edmund the Marchioness wished to see him.

He accordingly waited on her, and was introduced to a very elegant woman of middle age, but who had the remains of having been uncommonly handsome; her countenance, however, bore the marks of pensive melancholy, for which her mourning dress seemed in some measure to account.

Her Ladyship, who had been prepared to see an object of charity, was somewhat surprised at the entrance of Edmund, whose fine person and graceful address spoke him a man of fashion.

She rose to receive him, and made an apology for the liberty she had taken in requesting his company, but that she had been informed a poor man found her pocket-

pocket-book, and she had wished to give him a reward for his honesty.

Edmund coloured at his conscious poverty, but informed her of the old soldier, upon whose account he had sent her the message.

The prepossessing manners of Edmund had their usual effect, and the Marchioness found herself unaccountably interested about a young man whose appearance was so very pleasing.

She begged, as an accident had procured her the pleasure of a visit, that he would prolong it by staying to tea. He accepted her invitation, and his conversation confirmed the favourable impression the first sight of her visitor had made.

He, on his part, was no less charmed with the Marchioness, to whom he already felt he could open his heart, and intrust

all his cares and perplexities, as to an old friend.

She soon gave him an opportunity of doing so, by requesting to know if he was an inhabitant of Plymouth, or only like herself, a passenger.

“Alas!” said he, “I am, indeed, a passenger! a wanderer on the face of the earth! The child of unknown parents, purchased when an infant by a lady, who introduced me into a rich and respectable family as her son. I was educated as the heir of affluence, and the successful imposture was not discovered, till she on her death-bed confessed the fact. The excellent man who had for so many years looked on himself as my father, with sentiments unaltered by the discovery, treated me with unabated affection. But his fortune was likely to suffer so severely by the fraud his lady had practised, that I determined no longer to be a burthen on his goodness,

or to trespass on his bounty for what I knew he could so ill spare; I resolved to go as a volunteer to the East Indies, and came here with that intention; but my unlucky fate pursues me, all the ships failed yesterday morning. I am still, however, determined on going to the East Indies.

“Such, Madam, is the sketch of my life, which the kind condescension you have treated me with, has emboldened me to communicate, and I trust your goodness will pardon the liberty I have taken in troubling you with an account of events that can in no way be interesting to you.”

“Excuse me, Sir,” replied the Marchioness, with emotion, “I feel an interest in your welfare, for which, stranger as you are to me, I can only account by the strong resemblance you bear to a dear lamented friend, long since in Heaven!” She wiped her eyes, and was for some moments

ments silent ; at length with faltering voice she added, " The story you have told me has affected my spirits ; I must take leave of you for this evening ; but let me intreat to see you at breakfast to-morrow morning ; by that time I may have thought of something for your advantage. Mistress of fortune far beyond either my wants or wishes, I know no other pleasure from my wealth than that of making others happy. Yet e'er you go, let me inquire your name ?

" I was christened Edmund," replied he ; " it is the only name I know I have a right to."

The Marchioness regretted she had recalled unpleasant thoughts by her question ; and in some measure to divert his attention from his own misfortunes, she talked of the old soldier, who had found her pocket-book ; and hearing what a miserable object he was, she said she would see him before
she

he set out the next day, and give him a trifle for his honesty.

Edmund then withdrew; but e'er he retired to the chamber prepared for him, he went in quest of Corporal Trim, whom he found near the place where he had left him, gathering water-creffes in a little basket, which he told Edmund he had just purchased with part of the money he had given him. "God bless your honour," said he; "my wounds have made me very infirm, and I can do little for myself; but I am gathering a few creffes to sell in town, and now this basket looks so neat and clean, it will tempt people to buy them."

"Well," said Edmund, "I have got some good news for you; the book you found belonged to a lady, who desires you will come to the Fountain early to-morrow morning, and she will give you something for finding it."

He

He then returned to the inn; and after a supper on a dry crust of bread, and a draught of small beer, he went to bed; and, tired out with the fatigues of the day, he slept very sound till near ten o'clock next morning. He had desired to be called early, but the waiter not thinking him a person of great consequence, had never thought more of his orders.

He was vexed to find it so late, and hurried on his clothes, in order to keep his appointment with the Marchioness, whose carriage, as he perceived from the window, was preparing for departure.

He sent his respects, and was instantly admitted. The Marchioness had breakfasted; and chiding him gently for his want of punctuality, smiling, said, "it was apparent he had not thought so much of her, as she had done of him. I have some interest at the War-Office," continued she; "and have no doubt but I can easily procure
you

you a commission in a regiment at home, if you still hold your determination of going into the army." He said he preferred that profession to any other; at the same time he would rather go abroad.

"We will talk of that afterwards," replied she; "but you must not run away in this manner from all your friends. The excellent man you spoke of last night ought to be consulted in your future destination; believe me, it is false delicacy makes you fly from him; and, through fear of being a burden on his bounty, you wound his friendly heart by your absence: return, then, to the friends who love you, and give them the highest gratification a generous mind can know, an opportunity of shewing their friendship and regard."

"Your mind, discomposed by unlooked-for misfortunes, does not yet see things in their true light: but I think I may venture to predict, you will one day be convinced, that

that your having been prevented going a volunteer to the East Indies, which you now look on as ill luck, a most fortunate circumstance. Providence often decides better for us than we could do for ourselves, which reflection ought to prevent our murmurs, when our best-laid schemes are disappointed."

The amiable Marchioness soon brought Edmund to acknowledge the justice of her opinion: he gave her, as she requested, a direction to Sir Thomas Beaufort; she assured him his business should be her first care whenever she got to town: "But," said she, "as you can have nothing now to detain you here, you will, I hope, be in London nearly as soon as me. I beg you will call at my house, in St. James's-square, the moment you arrive; when I hope to have some good news to communicate to you."

She

She then gave him a guinea for the old soldier, who had not yet made his appearance; and Edmund, with the most grateful thanks for her kindness, handed the Marchioness into her carriage, and wished her a good journey.

When the equipage, attended by two servants, drove from the inn, Edmund stood with folded arms, listening to the decreasing sound of the wheels, till roused from his reverie by the waiter, asking if he chose to breakfast. Though never less disposed to eat, yet knowing he must call for something, he gave orders accordingly; and, desiring he might see Corporal Trim whenever he came, he threw himself into the chair the Marchioness had just quitted, recalling to mind every word and look of that interesting woman, to whom he found himself attracted by powerful, though unaccountable sympathy; and indulging hopes, that through her patronage and assistance,

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sistance, he might one day, perhaps, be enabled to look up to his Matilda.

That fair object of his meditations, and tenderest wishes, we left at Newton Lodge, with her friend, Mrs. Mansel.

Upon this very day, as it happened, these two ladies were sitting at work in the parlour, with little Harriet, when a servant acquainted Matilda a gentleman inquired for her. She, in whose thoughts only two men had any place, as this could not be her father, fancied it must be Edmund. It did not occur to either of them, that Edmund was not likely to have announced himself in so formal a manner; and Mrs. Mansel, reading the thoughts of Matilda in her animated features, desired the gentleman might be shewn in; and telling her fair friend, with a smile, she would return in a few minutes, she took Harriet's hand, and quitted the room.

Matilda

Matilda endeavoured to recover the sudden flurry her spirits had been thrown in, by the unexpected hope of seeing Edmund; when, anxiously looking at the opening door, her disappointment was mixed with surprize, to behold an entire stranger.

He appeared of middle age; his figure majestic, and his countenance wore the impression of grief, softened into resignation by the slow hand of time.

“ You, Madam, I presume, are Miss Leeson,” said he, advancing towards her. The strong likeness you bear your mother tells me I am right.

Matilda bowed assent, and begged him to be seated: he proceeded:

“ Your father, I am told, is not here ?”

“ No,

“ No, Sir, he went to London some little time ago.”

“ It is very unluckily,” said the stranger: then after a few moments pause—“ Did you ever hear you had an uncle ?”

“ Yes, Sir, I have often heard my father lament the untimely fate of a brother of my mother’s, who died before I was born.”

“ So it was said ; so it has been thought,” interrupted the stranger ; “ but, in me, Miss Leeson, you behold that long-lost, long-banished uncle.”

Astonishment and doubt kept Matilda silent ; her eyes were fixed on the stranger : his was not a countenance of deceit, yet she hesitated to credit his extraordinary assertion.

“ I see,” said he, “ I am not believed, nor can I wonder at it—here, then (taking
a mi-

a miniature from his bosom) here is a picture you may know."

"It is my mother!" exclaimed Matilda, "such as my earliest memory preserves her features in my heart. The dress, too, is in all respects the same as one my father has; and were not the setting different, I should almost think 'twas his."

"If this indeed belongs to you; if this blest saint (pressing the picture with devout reverence to her lips) was your sister, I am indeed your niece. Yet wonder seizes all my faculties; it seems so strange, so unaccountable.

"Oh! Sir, will you forgive me? that though my heart acknowledges the relationship, amazement still holds me in suspense, and checks the full belief your words, your looks, your actions claim. Will you indulge my curiosity, and tell me where you have been concealed these

many years, and how you now come here?"

"The first part of your question," said the stranger, "shall be answered at a future period; at present I will only explain my sudden appearance here.

"I was returning from France, on board a merchantman, when a storm drove us on this coast. The vessel ran aground on a ridge of rocks, above a mile from shore, and no hopes remained of saving her, or the cargo. When the sailors found she must go to pieces, they put out their boat with intention to make for Torbay. Already half the crew had entered the boat, when a heavy swell dashed her against the side of the ship: she sunk, and we saw our unhappy companions no more. The shades of evening were now coming on, and I proposed to the few sailors that still remained, to stay upon the wreck till the morning's dawn. But their Captain was

no

no more, and they looked on themselves as too much their own masters, to attend to what I said, especially as I was a landfman. They hoisted out the remaining boat, and stowed it with what spirits they could get at, at the same time taking a copious share of the liquor.

“ Whilst they were so employed, I fancied I perceived the sea rising on the rock on which we were, and imagined the ship might again float with the tide. I made the observations to my companions, but they listened not to me. In vain I advised them to abstain from the liquor they were making such free use of, till they were safe on shore. They laughed at my remonstrances, and by the time the boat was ready to put to sea, most part of the unhappy wretches appeared to me too much intoxicated to manage her; and I determined to remain where I was, thinking I had a better chance of preserving my life. They gave me three cheers as they rowed

away, and the darkness of night soon after hid them from my view.

“ No sound was now heard but the tempestuous wind howling through the tattered remains of ropes and sails; and the loud dashing of the impetuous waves, as foaming they lashed the rock, on which the head of the vessel was firmly fixed, whilst the stern was broken by the conflicting elements.

“ ’Twas then, that seated on the wreck, amidst impenetrable darkness, I waited the return of day, musing on the extraordinary events of my past life; and, whilst the memory of the sorrows that had torn my heart, the separation from all I loved, and total ignorance of their fate, wrung my soul with anguish, I forgot not the kind Providence which had hitherto preserved me, and softened the wounds of affliction. I resigned myself to my Almighty guard and protector, satisfied, that whether I lived or died, I was
equally

equally in his sight, and under his care. After addressing him in fervent prayer, I fixed myself as well as I could to the wreck, that I might not be washed overboard by a sudden motion of the vessel.

“ In this situation I remained all night, and when the sun arose the tempest was over, tho’ the surface of the ocean was still agitated. Part of the vessel remained fixed on the rock, but most of it, broken by the tempest of the former evening, was driven before the breeze. The land appeared at no great distance; and with the assistance of a broken piece of the wreck I committed myself to the mercy of the waves.

“ After a severe struggle of some hours, I was thrown senseless on the shore; where fortunately an old fisherman was mending his nets. To his friendly care I am indebted, under Providence, for the preservation of my life; not only when first cast

on shore, but during an illness I was seized with in consequence of fatigue.

“During the fever, my wife, my ever-dear Louisa, visited my dreams. Methought she stood beside me on the deck of the ship in which I was wrecked, and cheered me with the music of her voice. The dark clouds that were around us dissipated as she sweetly sung. At length the sun emerged in all its brightness, when hand in hand we seemed lightly to fly towards the regions of eternal day.”

He sighed deeply, and after a short pause proceeded in his narrative; whilst every word he uttered, more and more confirmed Matilda in the belief of his being the person he said he was.

“When I was well enough to be sensible of the obligations I owed the fisherman, he stopped my thanks by saying he had done no more than his duty, and what the first
princi-

principles of religion taught him, that of doing to others, as he wished them to do to him. He regretted that so little means of assisting me was in his power; and told a confused story about the young 'squire being found out not to be his own mother's son; and that the good family that lived in the cottage, and would and could have helped me, were gone away, and all the country were grieving for their departure. At length he mentioned the name of Lee-son; and upon applying to the curate, to whom he referred me for particulars, I found it was indeed my dear sister's family, and that you were here. After having, in the best manner I was able, rewarded my honest host, I set out for this place. I was in hopes to have found your father here; for I have at present no resource, but in the kind charity of my friends; and I have not, at this moment, cash sufficient to take me to London, in order that I may apply to those, whose memory may yet retain a recollection of me."

“My father,” said Matilda, “left me this purse, for my expences in his absence; but with my good Mrs. Mansel, I can want for nothing; accept it, then, my dear Sir, and with it my regret it is no more: yet it may be sufficient for your journey; and when you meet my father, you will no longer be at a loss for any thing he can bestow. Small is his power, though great his good will to assist his friends: but the little we have, we will share with you, my dear uncle, and call upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.”

A gleam of pleasure brightened the countenance of the stranger, and delight sparkled for a moment in his expressive eyes, as tenderly he thanked his lovely and generous niece.

At this moment Mrs. Mansel entered the room, unperceived by the gentleman, who sat with his back to the door. Prepossessed with its being Edmund, she laid her

her hand on his arm, exclaiming, "Matilda would not send for me to the conference, but you see I could not stay away," and was proceeding in her lively way, when he, starting at the sound of her voice, turned suddenly round.

Mrs. Mansel no sooner beheld his face, than she uttered a faint scream, and would have fallen to the ground had he not in an instant sprung wildly to her assistance, and caught her in his arms.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried she, as soon as she could speak; "do I dream? or do I indeed behold you? Oh! Theodore! tell me, is it indeed yourself! you, whose death we have so long lamented? Oh, by what miracle, what wonder are you here?"

Theodore, for it was himself, supported her to a chair, and kneeling at her feet, with clasped hands, and a voice almost inarticulate with agitation, exclaimed, "My

dear Maria, I meant not thus to have alarmed you; I knew not you were here; forgive me the emotion I have caused you. But Oh! tell me, do you know of my Louisa? does she live? where is she?"

"She lives," said Mrs. Mansel, and, faithful to the memory of her Theodore, her heart has never known another choice."

"Oh, Heaven! I thank thee!" cried he, in an ecstasy of joy; "this does indeed soften the painful memory of all I have endured, and cheers my heart with the prospect of happiness yet in store for my future years. Yes, I will fly to my Louisa, and lose, in her dear presence, the remembrance of all my sufferings."

When the first tumult of joy and surprise at this unexpected meeting was a little abated, Theodore begged Mrs. Mansel to

to assist him in convincing Matilda he was in reality her uncle.

"I am convinced," said Matilda, throwing herself into his arms.

Whilst Mrs. Mansel, all astonishment at this new discovery, eagerly inquired if Miss Leeson was indeed his niece?"

"Nothing more true," replied Theodore; Mrs. Leeson was my half-sister. But I have many questions to ask of you, my dear Maria; will you favour me with a few moment's conversation?"

"Surely," said Mrs. Mansel, and led him to her dressing-room; leaving Matilda hardly recovered from the surprize and agitation the events of the morning had given rise to in her gentle bosom.

It was above an hour before Mrs. Mansel returned. Her eyes were swelled, and she looked as if she had been crying.

“ I could not prevail on our visitor to stay dinner,” said she, with an air of satisfaction that ill accorded with the above symptoms ; and Matilda, who rather chose to take the latter, than the former, as an index of her friend’s spirit, rejoiced to believe their conversation had not wholly been of the melancholy nature she had feared. Mrs. Mansel indeed appeared uncommonly animated, and Matilda thought she had never seen her so cheerful since they left Plymouth.

Matilda immediately begged, with impatience, to be informed about her uncle. “ I can hardly yet persuade myself,” said she, “ of the reality of this morning’s visit ; nor have I yet recovered from the surprise occasioned by the unexpected appearance of a relation, who I always understood died before I was born. You, my dear Madam, seem to have been well acquainted with my uncle, will you have the goodness to give me some information about

about him, and that Louisa he seems so much interested for."

"I will, with much pleasure, tell you all that I know," answered her friend; "but I fear that will not entirely satisfy your curiosity; for I meant to have asked Theodore a thousand questions about his disappearance, instead of which, I was so flurried with seeing him, and he so anxious to learn some interesting particulars, that I could inform him of, that he never told me a word of his own history; but employed the whole time of our conference in hearing what I had to say. Some men alledge," continued she, smiling, "that our sex always make more use of their tongue than their ears; and I have certainly, on this occasion, proved that it is so. However, I hope to have more interviews with Mr. Bevil soon, and then he shall tell us all his adventures; mean while, by telling you the principal circumstances I already know,
I shall

I shall prepare you for the continuation of the history."

"The Marquis of Clarville had two children, the Earl of Aubury, and Lady Louisa Sedley. At Eton school Lord Aubury made acquaintance with Mr. Bevil, nephew to a gentleman of good fortune, in Devonshire. They were removed at the same time to the same university, and during their school holidays and college vacations, were always together at Clarville Castle. By similarity of temper and disposition, they contracted the warmest friendship, which was farther cemented by the attachment Mr. Bevil felt towards Lady Louisa, and which was returned by her with reciprocal affection.

"It was the first wish of Lord Aubury's heart, that his friend might become his brother. He encouraged him to make proposals to the Marquis, and seconded his

his plea with so much ardour as to insure its success.

“ The Marquis doated on his children, and readily agreed to an alliance that promised to make them happy.

“ My father was a distant relation of the Clarville family; Lady Louisa and I had been brought up entirely together from our childhood, and nothing can be more perfect than the friendship that has ever subsisted between us, though it has been sadly broken in upon by various unpleasant events. The first sorrow I ever experienced was being separated from her. The Marquis had ordered the necessary preparations to be made for celebrating his daughter's nuptials at Clarville Castle, with the splendor and rejoicings worthy of so ancient and noble a family, when my father, being appointed consul at Algiers, I accompanied him to that place. There, a few years after, I met with Captain Mansel, who at
that

that time commanded a frigate on the Mediterranean station. Soon after our marriage I went with him to the West Indies, and did not return to England for several years. This history of myself is a little digression, merely to account to you for the interest I take in your uncle's concerns; but let us go on with his history.

“The day was fixed for his marriage with Lady Louisa, when the amiable Lord Aubury, who was immoderately fond of hunting, riding an unruly horse, was thrown, and brought home speechless. He survived but a few hours, and left his family in poignant affliction.

“This melancholy event of necessity postponed the intended marriage. The old Marquis was extremely overcome, and his spirits seemed to sink beneath the cruel blow.

“At this time his brother, Lord Francis Sedley, arrived at the Castle. He was much younger,

younger, and of a disposition widely different from the good old Marquis. Artful, designing, and ambitious, no scheme was above his intriguing head to plan; no atrocity beyond his wicked heart to execute. With all this, he was a most consummate hypocrite, and wore, with but too much success, the masque of mild virtue. This fully appeared by his conduct.

“As soon as Lord Francis heard of his nephew’s death, he laid the plan of breaking off Lady Louisa’s intended marriage, and making her the wife of his son.

“She was now sole heiress of her father’s fortune and title, and Lord Francis thought her too rich a prize to go out of the family.

“With this view he came to Clarville, under the plausible pretext of visiting his brother in his affliction; and, as he said, to mingle tear for tear for the loss of their beloved

beloved Lord Aubury. With the most cunning art he worked on the mind of the Marquis, to prevail on him to revoke the consent given to Mr. Bevil, and to confer the hand of Lady Louisa on his son.

“The Marquis, worn down with age and sorrow, and constantly besieged by his artful, insinuating brother, at length proposed the marriage to his daughter, and forbid Theodore the house. Remonstrances, intreaties, every argument the unhappy Lady Louisa could urge were vain. Her cousin, at that time on his travels, was ordered home, and the marriage was settled by the fathers to take place immediately upon his return.

“Lord Francis in the mean while was playing a double game. He knew, though the title must go to Lady Louisa, great part of the fortune was in the Marquis's power. If she obeyed her father, by marrying her cousin, he secured both to his
family;

family; and if she refused, it was probable the Marquis, irritated by her disobedience, would disinherit her, and settle his estate on his nephew. With this view he kept up the appearance of the utmost affection for his unsuspecting niece; and frequently taking her part with his brother when she was present, against the interest of his son, made her believe him her friend, whilst the apparent generosity of his conduct confirmed the Marquis in approving all his views.

“ Mr. Bevil and Lady Louisa, attached from their earliest years, were too strongly united by the truest affection, to make their separation an affair of facility. They easily persuaded themselves, that the consent of the Marquis once given, no retraction on his side ought to affect them. Therefore, a few days before the expected arrival of Mr. Sedley, Lady Louisa, dreading being compelled to marry him, was induced to listen to the persuasions of her beloved Theodore.

Theodore. She concerted to marry him privately, which ceremony was performed by the clergyman of the parish, who had been tutor to Lord Aubury, and was much attached to Mr. Bevil.

“ Lord Francis concealed the rage and vexation his disappointment had filled him with, under an appearance of the most friendly attention and affection; and soon after set out for the metropolis, in order to meet his son, who was just returned from the continent.

“ Mean while the young couple found no great difficulty in obtaining the Marquis’s entire forgiveness for a step, which, though taken without his knowledge, could hardly be called against his consent; and, for some months, all was harmony and happiness at Clarville Castle.

“ Some business of consequence required Mr. Bevil’s presence in London: reluctantly

tantly he left his Louisa, and promising as speedy a return as the nature of his business would admit, he set out for London, attended by one servant.

“ A few days after his departure, the Marquis was taken extremely ill, and notwithstanding the best medical advice, after a week's illness, expired in the arms of his afflicted daughter.

“ Expresses were instantly dispatched to Lord Francis and Mr. Bevil. His Lordship soon arrived, but Mr. Bevil did not appear. Lady Louisa had not heard from him since his departure, and she expected his return day after day, with the most anxious and uneasy impatience: at length Mr. Bevil's servant returned with the sad tidings, that his master was no more.

“ The account he gave of the melancholy event was this:—The very day of his arrival in town, a letter was brought
him

him by a porter ; upon reading it, he told his servant he was obliged to go into the city that evening, and should probably not be back till late. The man sat up all night, waiting his master's return in vain : after two days he became extremely alarmed, and being an entire stranger in London, knew not what to do. His landlord advised him to advertise his master in all the newspapers, as the only way of finding him. He did so, and at the same time, as he says, wrote a letter to the Marquis, which letter, however, never arrived. At length an anonymous answer came in consequence of his advertisement, to inform him, that such a person had been found murdered in an alley near Temple Bar ; and the body was then lying at an undertaker's in the Strand. The poor man, half distracted, went as he was directed ; he was shewn the coffin in which the body was deposited, and his master's clothes, with his watch and seals, were delivered to him.

There

“ There was no room to doubt of the melancholy fate of his beloved master; and leaving the coffin where it was for the present, he set out instantly for Clarville Castle, with the dismal account. He then delivered to Lord Francis the watch, &c. that had belonged to his unfortunate master. ”

“ This melancholy intelligence was communicated to the poor Marchioness by degrees, as her spirits and strength of mind were equal to bear it. The body of Mr. Bevil was brought to Clarville Castle with great pomp, and a magnificent monument erected to his memory,

“ After having been fully persuaded of all these particulars,” continued Mrs. Mansel, “ judge of my astonishment when I this morning beheld Mr. Bevil. I still cannot account for it; for his servant had been with him several years, and seemed too much attached to his master and mistress to invent such a story, of the truth of which no
one

one ever doubted. Yet, that it must have been false, the re-appearance of Theodore is a most convincing proof. But to proceed with my narration.

“The Marchioness, who was with child, was so much overpowered with grief, that she remained for some time in a state of melancholy dejection. She was ordered change of air; and Lord Francis, whose attention to her was unremitting, proposed that she should go to his house in Yorkshire.

“She complied with his wishes, and her health grew visibly better, as she approached the time of her delivery. She was brought to bed of a son; the small-pox was said to be in the neighbourhood, and the child, when only a few days old, was sent with his nurse, out of the reach of infection. The infant, however, was very delicate, and did not survive its removal: the very next morning, the nurse, upon
awaking

awaking, found it lying dead by her side. Every precaution was taken to soften this melancholy event to Lady Clarville; but who can describe her anguish, she seemed a second time to have lost Mr. Bevil. She insisted upon seeing the dead infant, it was brought, the sight was too much for her, and she fell into fits; for some time her life was despaired of; however, through the excellence of her constitution, she at length recovered to health, though not to happiness.

“It was then her uncle tried all his powers of persuasion to induce her to give her hand to his son; when finding her resolutely determined never to marry again, he had recourse to the most artful manœuvres to induce her to settle her estate on himself. The extreme anxiety he shewed for her doing so, defeated his purpose, by rendering the Marchioness suspicious that his conduct had all along been dictated by the most interested motives, and she im-

mediately determined to quit his house, and return to Clarville Castle.

“ She accordingly gave orders for this purpose, but, to her no small surprise, found herself a prisoner. Lord Francis had taken advantage of her illness, to remove all her old faithful domestics from about her, and to insinuate to the world that her intellects were deranged.

“ He had hitherto treated her with apparent kindness, but having now no farther hopes of prevailing on her to become the wife of his son, he at once threw off the mask. As her next heir, he took the management of her estate, and kept my unfortunate friend in close confinement.

“ When I returned to England about ten years ago, the first thing I did was to inquire for her; and this was the melancholy account I received; she still remained at her uncle’s house, and was universally

versally believed to be insane. The opinion I had of Lord Francis, led me, however, to doubt the truth of this story, and I communicated my suspicions to Captain Mansel and my father, who was, next to Lord Francis and his son, the nearest relation of the Marchioness. They requested to be allowed to see her, but in vain ; her disorder he said was too violent to permit her to receive visitors. Upon this refusal they applied to Chancery, and at length, after some time, and much trouble, they obtained an order to see the Marchioness in presence of her keepers.

“ Nothing could prevent my attending them on this melancholy expedition ; and accompanied by a very eminent physician, who thoroughly understood the nature of such disorders, we set out for Yorkshire.

“ Never will that interview with my beloved and greatly injured friend, be effaced from my memory. By the mercy
1 2 of

of Heaven her senses still remained perfect, though the barbarous usage she had been treated with, had nearly thrown her into the situation they had represented.

“ We were all instantly convinced of the infamous deception that had been practised, and my father taking upon himself the authority of so near a relation, restored the dear prisoner to liberty, and handed her into our carriage, in spite of the opposition of the keepers, and some of his Lordship’s domestics, whose threats of the displeasure of their master, you may believe, were little regarded.

“ We all returned to London, and having sufficiently proved that the Marchioness was in full possession of her reason, she was reinstated in all her rights. Lord Francis was at this time overwhelmed with distress for the loss of his only son, who had been killed in a duel, in consequence of some dispute at the gaming-table.

table. And the Marchioness, with those amiable sentiments which so conspicuously adorn her character, would not suffer him to be prosecuted, which must have occasioned the ruin of the brother of her father.

“He is sufficiently punished,” said she, “by the discovery of his wickedness, and the loss of that son for whose sake he has persecuted me. Avarice and ambition have plunged him into guilt, and the disappointment of these passions will prove but too lasting a torment. Tell him I forgive what is passed, and shall call for no account of what he has received; I leave it to his conscience to restore what he ought, but never let me see him again.

“The message was delivered; but vexation at all his schemes being frustrated, and raging sorrow for the death of his son, rendered him almost frantic, and he im-

precated the most horrid curses on her, himself, and all the world. In short, he grew so very violent, it was found necessary to confine him, in order to prevent his doing some mischief to himself or others. But enough of this sad wretch, who died soon after in a fit of frenzy.

“ The health of my sweet friend was so impaired by long confinement, that it was thought necessary she should go for some time to a milder climate. I accordingly attended her to the south of France, and she returned surprisingly better ; but about two years since being threatened with a relapse, she was persuaded to try the mild air of Lisbon ; she is now returning, as her last letter informs me, in perfect health, and with a degree of composure she had never hoped to obtain.

“ Such is the history, most part of which I have been relating to Theodore, though obliged to use great precaution,
and

and to soften some circumstances, which would otherwise have too much affected his tender and feeling heart.

“ He is gone to London, where I imagine the Marchioness may have by this time arrived; but I have made him promise to take no measures for seeing her, till I come to prepare her for an interview so unexpected, and which must be so agitating to her sensibility. He has agreed to be wholly guided by me, provided I set out to-morrow morning; so, my dear, if you please, I mean to obey his wishes.”

Matilda thanked her for the trouble she had taken in communicating these very interesting particulars, and assured her she was quite ready to attend her to town.

The two ladies and little Harriet accordingly set out early the following morning,

and arrived the next evening at Mrs. Mansel's house in Doyer Street.

Theodore had arrived some hours before them, and had learned that the Marchioness was at her own house in St. James's Square. Great was his impatience to see her, though he had acquiesced in Mrs. Mansel's opinion of the necessity of her being prepared for the interview. And he now urged her, as it was perhaps too late to visit the Marchioness that night, that she would at least send her a note to announce her arrival in town, and her intention of seeing her next morning.

The Marchioness's answer expressed both pleasure and surprise at hearing her friend was in London, begged to see her immediately, being impatient to introduce to her acquaintance, the man in the world most dear to her, and to call for Mrs. Mansel's congratulations on a most joyful event.

The

The change in Mrs. Mansel's countenance as she read this note, alarmed Theodore, who eagerly taking it out of her hand, and casting his eye over it, exclaimed, "Good God! this is too much after all my sufferings, am I at last arrived too late? Too sure I am forgot, and my Louisa loves another;" then throwing himself into a chair, he covered his face with both his hands, and burst into tears.

"For Heaven's sake be comforted, my dear Theodore," said Mrs. Mansel, "I know the Marchioness too well to believe your suspicions can have the smallest foundation. After so long a constancy as her's, it is impossible she can now forget you."

Mrs. Mansel said more than she thought, in her attempt to comfort Theodore; for she observed the note was altogether written with more gaiety than she ever expected

pected her friend to possess; and though at any other time she would sincerely have rejoiced in the apparent restoration of her friend's good spirits, yet the manner in which she mentioned the unknown gentleman, alarmed Mrs. Mansel, in spite of all her reliance on the constancy of the Marchioness.

Mr. Leeson, whom Matilda had informed of their journey, and the extraordinary occasion of it, now entered the room, and with the sincerest joy embraced his long-lost friend. Even his daughter was but a secondary object in his thoughts at this joyful moment.

Matilda received her father with unaffected smiles of delight; her first question was after his health; her next, when he had seen Edmund.

“Alas!” said he, “Edmund has left London; Sir Thomas knows not where he

he is, but imagines, from the tenor of a letter he left behind him, he is gone abroad as a volunteer."

This intelligence was wholly unexpected by poor Matilda. The letter he had written, by some accident did not reach Newton Lodge, till after she had left it, and was now following her to London.

"What is the meaning of all this?" cried she, "does not Mrs. Groves know where he is?"

"It was upon finding Mrs. Groves, not his mother," replied Mr. Leeson, that he determined to go abroad."

"Mrs. Groves, not his mother!" repeated Matilda; "and who then are his parents?"

"My dear child," answered Mr. Leeson, "we know not, I have given you all the

information Sir Thomas could give me ; but he has sent to Plymouth, from which place the troops were to embark, to inquire after him, and to insist on his return ; at least till a commission can be procured for him."

"Oh, Heavens !" cried Matilda, clasping her hands, "how unfortunate am I !"

"We are all unfortunate, my dear girl," interrupted her uncle, with a heavy sigh ; "yet, let us not make ourselves unnecessarily so. All this may yet turn out better than we expect ; there is an Almighty Being watches over the events of our lives ; he is good as well as powerful, and never afflicts his creatures, but for their ultimate advantage. Let us trust in him to dissipate the dark clouds which now hang over us, or inspire us with pious fortitude to meet our adverse fate with resignation to his will."

"Come

“Come, my dear Mrs. Mansel,” continued he, taking her hand; “when I think of what I have undergone in the close confinement of five and twenty tedious years, how I have been released and restored to my native country and friends, and have lived to hear of the unexampled constancy of my adored wife; I will yet hope the cup of happiness raised to my lips will not now be dashed from my hand. But let us lose no time, I will attend you to St. James’s Square, and wait at the door in anxious agitation till you inquire my fate.”

On their arrival at the Marchioness’s they were shewn into the parlour; and Mrs. Mansel being informed that her friend was in her dressing-room, without waiting for a servant to announce her, ran up stairs, and gently opening the door of the well-known apartment, beheld a sight which at once rivetted her to the spot where she stood.

The

The Marchioness, with a countenance dressed in smiles of delight, was looking tenderly on a young officer, who kneeling at her feet, with both her hands in his, intreated her to consent to his happiness.

“You are too dear to me,” replied the Marchioness, “for me to hesitate a moment in granting any request you make.”

When lifting up her eyes, and seeing Mrs. Mansel, she gave a sudden scream, and flew to embrace her. The officer started up, and to her infinite surprise she beheld Edmund.

He advanced towards her, and was going to take her hand, but she withdrew it, disdainfully, and at the same time with a reproachful look, she said, in a low voice, “How is this! is Matilda forgot!”

Edmund,

Edmund, without answering her, cast his eyes on the Marchioness, who eagerly exclaimed, "Oh! my dear, dear Maria, I have got the most pleasing, the most delightful intelligence to communicate to you.—But you do not seem to enter into my joy; you look grave, and I fear you are more interested for the happiness of this Matilda you talk of, than about your old friend."

Astonishment and vexation kept Mrs. Mansel silent.

The Marchioness guessed what was passing in her mind, and smiling, said, "Why should I any longer keep my dear kind friend in the teasing suspense we have thrown her into, when we ought rather to claim her participation in our happiness."

Then taking the hand of Edmund, she continued, "Let me present this dear youth to you as Lord Aubury, as my son,
and

and wonder no longer at the scene you have witnessed."

"Gracious Heaven! can this be true?" cried Mrs. Mansel.

"Nothing more certain," replied Edmund, taking the hand she no longer withheld. "In this charming, this excellent woman, I have discovered a mother; and a mother who kindly consents to my happiness in allowing me to throw my fortune and title at the feet of my adored Matilda, and claiming, as Earl of Aubury, that hand she disdained not to promise to the poor unknown Edmund."

"I am so surprised and so overjoyed," said Mrs. Mansel, "that I have not words to express half what I feel; but, believe me, my heart most truly congratulates you both, and particularly you, my dear Marchioness, most truly do I rejoice at the
the

the prospect of happiness which now opens to your view."

"I am, indeed," returned the Marchioness, whilst she wiped from her eyes the starting tear; "I am, indeed, happier than ever I expected to have been in this world." Then sighing, added, "Oh, had my Theodore lived to see this day; to see our child restored to us, possessing every virtue and accomplishment which the fondest parents could wish!"

"And who knows," interrupted Mrs. Mansel, "what may be yet in store for you! after the miraculous recovery of your son, I begin to think nothing is impossible, and that even Theodore may be restored. Suppose the account of his death was false; suppose——"

"What mean you," cried the Marchioness, with extreme agitation; "you are not used to let your imagination carry
you

you away ;—tell me—Oh ! tell me, then, have you any reason for the extraordinary supposition you have just made. My friend—my Maria—if you love me, explain yourself, and keep not my whole soul on this torturing rack of suspense.”

“ Be calm, my dearest Louisa,” said Mrs. Mansel, folding her arms round the agitated Marchioness ; “ I have, indeed, reason to suppose Mr. Bevil still lives, to find in the constancy of his adored Louisa, a sweet reward for all the misery he has endured in being torn from her.”

“ Where is he, where is my Theodore ?” exclaimed she, wildly ; then throwing her arms round Edmund, she burst into a flood of tears.

Mrs. Mansel rejoiced in her having this relief to her flurried spirits, as she hoped it might preserve her from fainting ; and in a few minutes seeing her friend in
some

some degree recovered, she told her she had seen Theodore, that he was in London, and that he only waited till she was prepared to see him.

“ Oh !” cried she, “ I am prepared—bring him to me.”

Mrs. Mansel instantly went to the parlour, where she had left Theodore, whom she now found traversing the room with hasty steps, full of the most anxious impatience to know the result of her interview with Lady Clarville.

Scarce had Mrs. Mansel told him the Marchioness knew he was alive, and was in eager expectation of seeing him, than he flew to her apartment.

Prepared as she had been, to see her long-lost husband, the tumult of joy was too much for her delicate frame, and she fainted in his arms.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mansel, whose presence of mind never forsook her, at once comforted Theodore, whose frantic exclamations declared his apprehensions of having murdered his Louisa, and used every proper means to recover that lady.

Her endeavours were soon successful. The Marchioness opened her fine eyes, and fixing them on Theodore, exclaimed, "It is, it is my long-lost love, my lord, my husband!" Then clasping her hands, and raising her grateful looks to Heaven; "My God, I thank thee," cried she, "but Oh! support me in this hour of unlooked-for bliss, and teach me to bear happiness with moderation, as thou hast already enabled me to endure misery with fortitude."

Theodore pressed his charming wife to his fond faithful bosom; and in broken sentences alternately expressed his tender affection to his beloved Louisa, and gratitude

tude to that Being whose goodness had thus so happily ended all his sorrows.

When this happy pair were a little composed, Mrs. Mansel turning to Mr. Bevil, asked him with a smile, if he was already too happy, or if he could bear a farther increase with tolerable calmness.

“ My kind friend,” he replied, “ I cannot imagine what you can mean ; after having my Louisa restored to me, what additional happiness can you have to confer ? ”

“ I have a present to make you,” said Lady Clarville ; behold in this young man, our child, snatched from me almost the first moment of his existence, wonderfully preserved from that death to which I had been taught to believe him a prey, and restored to my arms within these few hours.”

Edmund,

Edmund, who had remained a silent, though deeply interested spectator of the affecting scene, now threw himself at the feet of his parents, and pressing a hand of each to his lips, with a voice broken by sobs, he exclaimed, "My father! my mother! and is it at length permitted me to call by those tender names the real authors of my existence! If this be illusion, good Heaven, let me die and think it real."

The happy father tenderly embraced Edmund, saying, "This is, indeed, a very unexpected addition to the happiness I thought incapable of increase."

Mrs. Mansel then said, "I must own, my dear friends, I am extremely impatient to know many particulars of this doubly interesting discovery; but I perceive I must postpone my curiosity till to-morrow." She then took an affectionate leave
of

of the happy party, promising to see them next morning.

“ Let me ask you after my Matilda,” said Edmund, as he handed her into her carriage; “ is she in town? where is she? has she got a letter I wrote her?”

“ One question at a time,” answered Mrs. Mansel, laughing at the earnest manner in which he addressed her. “ She is at my house in Dover Street, and we will expect you to breakfast to-morrow morning; but she has got no letter from you, and I left her quite miserable about your absence from London, of which her father had just informed her.”

“ Relieve her anxiety about me, my dear Mrs. Mansel,” cried he; “ tell her I am well, that you have heard of my return to town, but say not a word of the happy discovery that has taken place; let me have

have the pleasure of informing her of that myself."

"I will obey your commands, my Lord," replied she, "and shall expect you at an early hour to-morrow."

Mr. Leeson had gone home to his friend in the city, and on Mrs. Mansel's return to Dover Street, she found Matilda alone, with eyes that plainly shewed the melancholy manner in which she had been employed.

"I have good news for you, my dear Matilda," said her friend; "Edmund is in town, safe and well, and will be here to wait on you to-morrow morning."

"Thank God," cried Matilda; "I hope I shall be able to prevail on him to give up his intention of going abroad. I have been thinking my uncle may have it in his power to provide for this excellent
young

young man ; as Lady Clarville's husband, he certainly must have some interest."

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Mansel, with an arch smile she could not repress ; "and I am very sure Mr. Bevil will do every thing in his power to serve Edmund. But, my dear, you have asked nothing about your uncle, and how this interview with his amiable and constant Louisa turned out."

"I saw by your cheerful countenance," said Matilda, "that all was well and happy ; and, indeed, I was going to ask particulars, but you mentioned Edmund."

Mrs. Mansel now recounted as much of what had passed, as she could, without breaking her promise to Edmund.

"But who," said Matilda, "was the young man so warmly mentioned in her Ladyship's note?"

“It was the Earl of Aubury; a very pleasing young man, indeed,” replied Mrs. Mansel. “It seems he has seen you some where or other, and is very much in love, I assure you; and begged me to interest myself in his behalf.”

“I hope,” said Matilda, gravely, “you refused that request, and told him how very unsuccessful it must be.”

“Indeed, I did no such thing,” answered she, “for I assure you he made me very much his friend during our short conversation; and when I think that, added to a very engaging appearance, he has wealth and title to offer my sweet friend; it seems an alliance so equal to her merits and pretensions, that I should be very sorry if she declined the proposal he means to make.”

“Is it possible, my dear Mrs. Mansel,” replied Matilda, “that you know so little of my sentiments as to imagine I could so

far forget my engagements to Edmund, as to listen for an instant to the addresses of another. He was rich and prosperous when he first offered me his hand, and I must say, every adverse circumstance that has befallen him, has only more increased my love and my esteem. At present, poor and friendless as he is, I prefer him to every man on earth, and only wish I was now possessed of the riches which once were mine, that I might bestow them where I have given my heart.

“No, my dear friend,” added she, “fate may perhaps separate me for ever from Edmund, but as I never can have an equal affection for any other; if I am not destined to be his wife, I will remain single. This new favourite of your’s may be very charming, but his suit to me would be fruitless, for never will I marry Lord ——”

“Hush, my dear,” interrupted Mrs. Mansel, putting her hand on her mouth,

to stop the half uttered vow "make no rash resolution." And lest she should betray the secret she had promised to keep, she hastily bid Matilda good night, and retired to her apartment.

Edmund was punctual to his appointment the following morning, and was received by Matilda with a delight she did not attempt to conceal.

She gently chided him for having, as she said, run away from all his friends, and told him of her having discovered her uncle, and her hopes, through his means, of getting some establishment for him, which would enable him to live at home in comfort and independence. She then proceeded to comfort him in respect to his unknown birth, of which she was now fully informed, by having at last received the letter he had written.

Her happy lover listened in rapture to all she said; every proof she gave of truth
and

and constancy to the unfortunate and deserted Edmund, rendered the discovery of his birth and fortune more valuable in his eyes. His father and mother had been delighted to find on whom his affections were placed, and he was come to his Matilda to express their full consent and approbation.

In this situation, to be convinced by every word she uttered, that he was loved for himself alone, filled his bosom with happiness. He pressed her lovely hand to his lips with ardor, as he exclaimed, "Exalted goodness, and will my beloved, adored Matilda, condescend to accept her Edmund, with nothing worth offering but a faithful heart devoted to her?"

"Edmund," she replied, "I wish for nothing but to be more deserving of you. Such as I am, I am your's, whenever I can be so without detriment to your fortune and pursuits of life; whenever, in
K 3 short,

short, it is not, as, alas! I fear now it would be ruin to you to be burthened with a wife."

The entrance of Mrs. Mansel prevented the answer of the enraptured Edmund, but his eloquent eyes expressed the gratitude his tongue was at that moment hindered from uttering.

"I am glad you are come," said Mrs. Mansel; "I hope you will second my suit to Matilda in favour of a certain great favourite of mine, the Earl of Aubury; I talked to her of him last night, but she positively refused to hear me; and at last, had I not fortunately prevented the sentence being completed, would absolutely have *vowed* never to marry him; though I assured her, he had at least as many good qualities as you, with wealth and a title into the bargain."

"There

“ There seems to me,” said Matilda, “ some mystery in all this, which I cannot comprehend; that you, my dear Mrs. Mansel, who so well know every thought of my heart, should persist in talking of Lord Aubury, and even mention him in the presence of Edmund.”

“ Loveliest and most amiable of women,” cried he, “ thus kneeling before you, and pressing this dear hand to my beating heart, let me intreat your favour for Lord Aubury; unless you will accept his offered hand and title, I shall be miserable and wretched—for in me, my darling friend, you behold that Aubury of whom Mrs. Mansel speaks, and who looks up to you for all the happiness of his future days.”

He then in a few words informed her, he had been providentially found out to be Lady Clarville's son.

After the pleasing surprise this intelligence occasioned Matilda, was in some degree subsided, Mrs. Mansel joined her in requesting he would give them the particulars of this interesting discovery. Edmund readily complied with their wishes. He first informed them what the reader already knows, the interview with Mrs. Groves, and his subsequent journey to Plymouth, where he remained, after Lady Clarville's departure, to inquire after the old soldier who went by the name of Corporal Trim. He then proceeded, saying, "that the poor man soon made his appearance, and I gave him the guinea the Marchioness had left, and invited him to partake of my breakfast; 'God bless you, Sir,' said the old soldier, sitting down.

"At this moment the waiter came into the room, and gave me the pin, which, in the hurry of dressing, I had forgot, and left in my bed-chamber.

'Oh,

‘ Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!’ cried the old soldier, the moment it caught his eye; ‘ where did your Honour find that ?’

“ Wherefore do you ask ? I anxiously demanded.

‘ Oh, your Honour,’ said he, wiping his eyes, and trembling from head to foot; ‘ I have repented of my wickedness long since, and I am sure I have gone through sufferings enough to atone for all I did ; for God knows I murdered neither of them.’

“ Neither of whom ? cried I, for Heaven’s sake explain yourself, and tell me what you mean, and if you ever saw this pin before.

‘ I will, I will, Sir—I will confess all my sins to you, for you look like a worthy gentleman, that will not betray a poor man. I was born of very honest parents in Lancashire; my name is John Brown.’

“ John Brown ! exclaimed I, have you a sister of the name of Groves ?

‘ Yes, Sir, I had, but it is many years since I saw her.’

“ Did you not,” continued I, almost breathless with emotion, once deliver a child to her care, whose mantle was fastened with a pin ?

‘ I did, I did,’ cried the poor old man ; ‘ I knew it the moment I set eyes on it. Have mercy on me, Sir, and I will tell you all.’

“ Make haste, then,” said I ; “ keep me not in this suspense, but tell me who that child was.”

‘ That child, Sir, was son to the Marchioness of Clarville.’

“ Gracious Heaven ! exclaimed I, what is it you tell me !”

‘ Nothing

‘Nothing but the truth, as I hope for mercy; but, Sir, are you the child?’

“I am.”

‘Oh! happy hour,’ cried the old soldier, ‘when I saved your life, and resisted the temptation of the devil.’

“It was some time before John Brown was composed enough to tell his story, or I could listen to it. At length, however, I gathered the following particulars:

“Brown had in his younger days gone to London to seek his fortune; where, sometimes in place, and sometimes out, he had met with various luck and adventures. At length he had fallen into bad company, and was by them, one night in a fit of intoxication, tempted to join in a footpad robbery. The watch came suddenly to the rescue of the person attacked, and Brown not being so much used to the

business as his companions, who made their escape, was seized and committed to prison. Here he was visited by the person whom he had attempted to rob, and who was no other than Lord Francis Sedley; he worked on the mind of the poor creature, by putting him in fear that his life was forfeited to the laws, and he must undergo a public execution. Seeing him sufficiently terrified at the apprehension, he at length proposed to him conditions of pardon, which he said he had interest enough to procure, provided he took an oath to obey him implicitly in a certain business he was engaged in. Brown accordingly, through fear of death, took the oath and promised secrecy.

“ Some time after Lord Francis sent for him, and gave him orders to go to a certain ale-house, and receive instructions from a man he would there meet with, and whom he would know by being dressed in a green coat and black cape. He
went

went accordingly and met this person, and two others. This man treated them with a glass of gin a-piece, and after some conversation, said, 'What you are wanted for is this, we are all to way-lay a gentleman, who will pass through Temple Bar at nine o'clock this evening, and convey him to Surry stairs, where we shall find a boat waiting for us.' One of these men was a hackney coachman, and was to have his coach in waiting to carry off the gentleman as soon as he should be seized.

"Brown shuddered with fright, when he found what he was to be engaged in, but it was too late to retract; and as murder did not seem intended, another glass of gin inspired him with resolution to obey the orders he had received.

"They assembled at Temple Bar at the hour appointed, and had not waited long before the person they expected arrived.

He was instantly knocked down and secured; they put him into the carriage, and drove to the water side. Here the man in green told Brown there was no farther occasion for him, and he desired him to inform Lord Francis what had been done.

“He did so, but secreted a fine pin which he stole from the gentleman after he was knocked down.

“Lord Francis, some months after this, took him into his service, and he was his Lordship’s footman at the time Lady Clarville lived at her uncle’s house.

“A few nights after the Marchioness was brought to bed, Lord Francis addressed him as follows: ‘John, you know how much your life is in my power; I have only one business more for you to execute, when that is done, ask your own reward, and be your own master.’

‘The

‘ The son of Lady Clarville must die ; I will send his nurse and him to a distance from this ; you shall know the road, and be it your business to end the brat’s life. There is a hundred guineas as the first fruits of what you may expect if you obey my commands ; if you hesitate, you know the power I have over your life, and dread the effects of my vengeance.’

“ Intimidated with the threats of Lord Francis, Brown took the purse and promised to do as he was desired. Remorse of conscience, however, seized him ; his heart, not bad by nature, relented, and he determined, if possible, to save the infant’s life. As he went towards the house where he had been ordered to perpetrate this deed of horror, he meditated on the means of saving both himself and the innocent child from the wicked Lord Francis. At this moment a travelling beggar accosted him, intreated his charity to enable her to bury her dead infant, who had just expired

pired on the road ; Brown rejoiced in this fortunate occurrence, which he looked on as a mark of the approbation of Heaven on his good resolutions. He had not much difficulty to prevail on the woman to sell him the dead child, and a basket she had with her, in which he put it. When he came to the house where he had been told he should find the nurse and the child, he stole to their apartment ; fatigued by her journey, the poor woman was found asleep, and the infant lying by her side ; he took it gently up, and laid the dead one in its place.

“ But now a new difficulty occurred, and he knew not what to do with the living child, which he had wrapped carefully in its mantle, and laid in the basket, At length he recollected he had a sister who lived only a few miles off, and to her he determined to deliver it ; his good resolutions strengthened as he advanced, and remembering the pin he had in his pocket,

pocket, he placed it in the child's mantle, and left it, as well as the purse, with Mrs. Groves.

“ But still fearful of Lord Francis, and terrified at the idea of being so much in the power of so wicked a man, and resolved no more to touch the wages of iniquity, instead of returning to claim his reward, he went to the next town, and inlisted with a recruiting party he found there.”

Such was the substance of John Brown's information, when cleared from the numberless digressions and observations with which it was interspersed; and Edmund could no longer doubt the truth of his being indeed the son of Lady Clarville.

Brown also told him, from what he had heard whispered in the family of Lord Francis, he had reason to suspect, that the gentleman whose seizure he had been accessory

cessary to, was in fact his father, Mr. Bevil, who was reported to have been murdered about that time, But of this gentleman, whoever he was, he could give no farther account than what has been already related.

Edmund, attended by the old soldier, to whom he promised not only pardon, but an ample provision for life, set out immediately for London; and, after taking every proper precaution that the interesting intelligence he had to communicate should not too violently affect the Marchioness, he informed her of every circumstance he had learned respecting himself, which was confirmed by the testimony of Mrs. Groves and her brother, to the entire satisfaction of the happy mother and her fortunate son.

Edmund recounted to Lady Clarville all the adventures of his past life. Her heart glowed with gratitude to the worthy Baronet

net who had been such a father to her child, and with affection to the amiable Matilda, who seemed so worthy of his love. She pitied the errors and crimes of Lady Beaufort, and returned thanks to that Providence, who, bringing good out of evil, had made her the means of Edmund's being educated in a manner suitable to his high birth, which in the cottage of farmer Groves he could not have been.

"And now," continued Lord Aubury, "comes the second discovery. The gentleman that Brown assisted to carry off was indeed my father; Mr. Bevil had gone it seems to London on business, and a forged letter from Mr. Leeson, decoyed him into the city, and enabled Lord Francis to execute his wicked plan.

"Before my father entirely recovered his senses from the blow which had knocked him down, he was stripped of his clothes, and of every valuable he had about him,
except

except a small locket he wore round his neck, containing the pictures of the Marchioness and his sister; and, in the coarse garb of a common sailor, was put on board a small vessel, and conveyed to the coast of France. He was landed on a lone shore, where a carriage and two horsemen, well armed, were in waiting.

“ The man in green that John Brown mentioned, and who was the principal emissary of Lord Francis, forced him into the carriage, and placing himself at his side, they drove off with the utmost speed. They found provisions in the carriage, of which his companion made a very hearty meal, and pressed my father also to partake. He, however, declined every thing but a piece of bread and a glass of wine. They travelled, without stopping, except to change horses, or to take some refreshment, which they found waiting for them on the road. The blinds of the carriage were constantly

stantly up during the day, and well secured, to prevent all possibility of escape.

“The man in green would make no answer to any question my father put to him. At length the rattling sound of the wheels announced their being in a town.

“Tell me,” said Mr. Bevil, “who are your employers, wherefore I am thus forcibly taken from my family and friends, and where you are carrying me.” The man was still silent. At length the carriage stopped, and the sound of massy doors grating on their hinges, proclaimed the entrance to some well-fortified prison.

“You are now,” said his conductor, “within the walls of the Bastille. Lord Francis Sedley swore your destruction the day of your marriage to his niece, when you took from him the chance of securing to his son the Clarville estate and title. The Governor of this fortress is his particular friend ;

friend; and I am forced, under pain of death, to deliver you up to him. Your friends believe you dead, and at this moment a magnificent funeral attends your supposed corpse to Clarville Castle."

"This dreadful intelligence deprived Mr. Bevil of his senses, and he fainted away. The apartment in which he found himself on his recovery, convinced him of the truth of what his informer had told him, with regard to his being in the Bastille, and he had no reason to doubt his information with respect to the cause of his arrest. The strong bare walls, and high grated windows of the dungeon were But let me cast a veil over the sufferings of my father," cried Lord Aubury, with strong emotion; "Blessed be God they are all over now, and we will not embitter the present moments of delight, by recalling those of misery, except to make us grateful to Heaven for the contrast."

"After

“After five and twenty years of solitary confinement amidst those dismal walls, an old man opened my father’s dungeon, and bid him follow him: he did so, and was led to a suit of apartments, where for some days, he found comforts and accommodation he had long been unused to. His attendants, however, spoke not, and he was left in anxious suspense about his future fate. The fifth day, a man, of whose face he had a recollection, entered his apartment. ‘I am,’ said he, ‘the person who tore you from your family and friends, in obedience to the commands of two monsters, to whose imperious will some unfortunate circumstances had subjected me. Lord Francis has been dead some years, and his friend, Count D——, Governor of this fortress, expired a month ago, expressing, with his latest breath, the strongest contrition for having so unjustly detained you here. You are now at liberty; take this purse, and return to your own country. Farewell.’

“My

“ My father immediately quitted Paris, and made the best of his way to the nearest sea port. You two ladies are already acquainted with the rest of his history.”

“ I always was convinced,” said Mrs. Mansel, that that detestable Lord Francis was deeply concerned in the fate of Mr. Bevil, though he managed matters so artfully he was not found out for so many years. Providence, however, will never let the wicked ultimately succeed; but they are, even in this world, exposed and brought to shame, at the moment they think their well-concerted schemes cannot fail. Mortification at the disappointment of his deep-laid villainy, and remorse of conscience, which even the most guilty must sometimes feel, accompanied this miserable wretch to his grave, and rendered all other punishment unnecessary.”

Lord Aubury now informed Matilda, he was immediately going to wait on his valued

lued and respected friend, Sir Thomas Beaufort, and to acquaint him with an event he knew would give him so much pleasure. "I have also an invitation for you, ladies, and Mr. Leeson, to dine in St. James's-square to-day. My mother wished to have waited on Miss Leeson, to have made this request in person; but I answered for my Matilda, she would rather wish Lady Clarville to remain at home this morning, and recover her spirits from the flurry the happy events of yesterday evening had thrown them into."

"I thank you," said Matilda, giving him her hand, "for so kindly expressing my sentiments."

Mr. Leeson arrived soon after Lord Aubury's departure, and Mrs. Mansel congratulated him on having at length his wishes for nobility gratified, as his daughter only waited for his consent, to give her hand to the Earl of Aubury.

“Indeed, my dear Mrs. Mansel,” said the good old man, “my wishes are only for my child’s happiness; but I had hoped her affections were firmly fixed on Edmund; for I must say, I love that excellent young man better than any other I ever knew; and would prefer him for a son-in-law, poor and friendless as he is, before the first Peer in the realm.”

“Thank you, my dear, dear Papa,” cried Matilda, “for this tribute to the merit of my beloved Edmund.” She then explained the whole history to her father, who was certainly by no means displeased to find the fortunate discovery that had been made of his favourite’s birth, and that his daughter would, after all, be a Countess.

When Mrs. Mansel’s coach stopped in St. James’s-square, Lord Aubury was already at the door; and, after receiving the congratulatory compliments of Mr. Leeson,

Leeson, he handed his lovely and blooming Matilda to his mother's dressing-room. Her uncle, whose fine countenance was now restored to its long-lost cheerful serenity, took her other hand and led her to the Marchioness, who received her with open arms, and pressed her to her heart, with maternal fondness. "My sweet niece," said she, "I hardly more rejoice in having found my son, than in the hope of calling you my daughter."

The blushing Matilda tenderly returned Lady Clarville's careffes, while in gentle accents she felicitated her on the happy events that had taken place.

"Here is my first friend," cried Edmund, presenting Sir Thomas Beaufort to Matilda, "who is impatient to pay his compliments to you." Matilda was unfeignedly rejoiced to see this good old man, who had been to Lord Aubury the best of fathers,

father's, and had so kindly approved his choice of her.

After a splendid and cheerful repast, the ladies adjourned to the drawing-room, where they were shortly after joined by Edmund, who, seating himself by Matilda, they soon fell into an interesting conversation of past pleasures and future hopes.

Whilst the two friends, the Marchioness and Mrs. Mansel, were no less occupied in chattering over all the strange events that had terminated so happily.

The gentlemen in the mean while, whom we left in the dining-room, were not solely employed with their bottle—they were settling the establishment of the young couple.

“My daughter,” said Mr. Leeson, “has nothing but the half of my small annuity.”

“We

“We will take nothing of that from you, my dear friend,” replied Mr. Bevil; “I have undertaken to settle all this business myself, and I hope you two gentlemen will approve of my plan.”

“In the first place I must inform you, that in me you see the real owner of the Woodland estate: my uncle, to whom it belonged, after my supposed death, made a will in favour of Mr. Denham, Lady Beaufort’s father; who, in consequence, succeeded to what, in fact, I was the sole heir of. I have already taken measures to prove my identity, and of course that will must be void. To you, Sir Thomas, I shall instantly grant acquittances in the fullest manner, for every thing that has been done by you. I can indeed do no less, either from justice or gratitude to whom I owe such a son as Edmund; and that estate I mean to settle directly on him and Miss Leeson; as the place where they have passed so many happy days, must have,

to them, peculiar charms. When you, Mr. Leeson, do not live with the young people, you must give us your company at Clarville Castle; and you, Sir Thomas, will be ever welcome to us all."

This piece of information about the Woodland property was extremely agreeable to Mr. Bevil's auditors.

Sir Thomas then acquainted Mr. Bevil he expected Mr. Nugent in town that very day, who had had the management of Woodland since the time it had come into the hands of Lady Beaufort's father. Mr. Carleton, who had taken possession both of that and the Denham estate, the moment Edmund was discovered not to be the heir, had turned him out at a very short warning, and replaced him with a petty-fogging attorney.

Mr. Bevil, expressing a wish to see this old steward, a message was dispatched to
Sir

Sir Thomas Beaufort's lodgings, with orders for his attendance in St. James's-square.

The happy groupe of friends were assembled over their tea and coffee, when Mr. Nugent was announced.

He had heard, from the servants of Sir Thomas Beaufort, the real birth of his beloved young master, as he had always called Edmund: and now his honest heart ran over at his eyes, as he made his sincere and hearty congratulations. But his joy received a great addition when he found that Edmund was indeed the true heir of Woodland.

“A-ha!” said he, rubbing his hands,
“Mr. Carleton may go back to his Negers when he pleases, for I have already found out the Denham estate is none of his, if so be that any descendant, male or female, of
I Mr.

Mr. Charles Denham remain; and I dare say there's plenty, if one could but find them; for he ran away from college to be married, it seems, and changed his name to *Hamden* instead of *Denham*."

"What, more discoveries," interrupted Mrs. Mansel, eagerly; "that, surely, must have been my little Harriet's father! and she is the heiress of the Denham estate, and grand-neice to Capt. Mansel."

A little time and investigation proved this conjecture true; and Mr. Carleton, after some vain attempts to keep possession of one or other of these estates, was at length obliged to relinquish both, and return, as Mr. Nugent said, to his Niggers.

The necessary arrangements were soon completed; and the happy Mr. Leeson presented the hand of his darling child, to the enraptured Edmund, at the altar, surrounded

rounded by their dearest friends, and many well-wishing attendants.

Immediately after the ceremony, the whole party set out for Clarville Castle, where they were welcomed by all their tenantry, and the whole neighbourhood, with every demonstration of joy and satisfaction.

After some swiftly-flying weeks spent in felicity, whose value was enhanced by the difficulties that had been experienced in the attainment, this happy society separated. Mrs. Mansel, and her engaging charge, returned to Newton Lodge. Mr. Leeson accompanied Sir Thomas to Beaufort Park; and Lord and Lady Aubury set out for Woodland Cottage, where they found every thing in high order, by Mr. Nugent's care, now reinstated in the office of bailiff of both estates, which he had held for so many years with integrity.

At

At Woodland Cottage Edmund and his Matilda spent their days in innocence and peace; they enlarged and improved the house and grounds, according to the plan they had proposed in former times. The education of their lovely children, the benevolent care of all their poor, and friendly attention to their richer neighbours; with all those rational pursuits and amusements their minds were so well formed to relish, made them respected and beloved.

Captain Mansel, on his return from his cruise, where he had acquired a sufficiency of fame and fortune, was agreeably surprised to hear the discovery that had been made of his little niece.

Her beauty daily improved, and under Mrs. Mansel's care, her accomplishments were equal to it.

Time and reason had cured the hopeless passion of Sir Charles Osborn for Matilda;
and

and when he returned to England, he unrepiningly congratulated the happy Lord Aubury. At that time he admired Harriet as a beautiful child: some years afterwards he beheld her an elegant and accomplished woman, whom he found to see and converse with, was to love.

He offered her his hand, which she accepted; and as there was no good house on the Denham estate, they built one for the pleasure of being in the neighbourhood of the Earl and Countess of Aubury; and, following their bright example, proved as happy in themselves, and as justly beloved by all around them.

Mr. Bevil was created Marquis of Clarville, and with his amiable wife lived long in the enjoyment of that title and fortune he had been so many years deprived of. They had the satisfaction of seeing Lord Aubury's eldest son of age, before they left this world for a better; and Mr. Leeson,
by

by surviving them a few years, had the original wish of his heart gratified, in being grandfather to a Lord.

Though clouds of adverse fate obscure the skies,
Yet never let the noble mind despair;
Still the bright sun of happiness may rise,
For Heaven makes virtue its peculiar care.



F I N I S.

